

MANARIWA:
A FILIPINA PERSPECTIVE ON INDIGENOUS CONTEMPORARY DANCE

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By
Toni Marie Temehanaoteahi Franco Pasion

Thesis Committee:
Kara Miller, Chairperson
Roderick Labrador
Amy Schiffner

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By

Toni Pasion

To my ancestors, for setting the space

To my parents, Tony and Marie

To my brother, Jayson

To my sisters Junie and Lori-Ann

To Abe

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an auto-ethnography utilizing dance, performance, and practice-as-research as cognitive methodologies to document indigenous contemporary dance from a Filipina perspective. There are three main segments of analysis: 1) my participation as a dancer in three indigenous contemporary dance projects that took place on Mannahatta/Manhattan, Guåhan/Guam, and Moloka'i, Hawai'i; 2) conducting a survey of dance in Antipolo, Manila, Nabua, Baguio, and Laoag, Philippines; and 3) producing a dance performance on O'ahu, Hawai'i entitled *Manariwa*. All of these events show how dance and performance are utilized to cultivate inter-cultural collaboration and community gathering. Impetuses of this thesis are to critically inquire Philippine cultural identity, cultivate indigenous relationships, and strategize how dance can be conducted as healing and as a method of cultural innovation. To do this, I question in each segment:

How does place inform choreo-graphy?

How do dance and performance help build communities and sustain cultures?

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	v
List of Figures	viii
List of Abbreviations	x
 Chapter 1 - Personal Narrative and Introduction.....	 1
Chapter 2 - Methodologies	8
Chapter 3 - Literature, Performance, and Media Review	14
Chapter 4 - Shape-Shifting Bodies and Architectures	23
Chapter 5 - Vignettes of Indigenous Contemporary Dance	30
Mannahatta, Lenapehoking: Indigenous Dance Forum	30
Guåhan: <i>Fanhasso</i>	42
Molokaʻi, Hawaiʻi: I Moving Lab	59
Chapter 6 - Philippines: Survey of Dance	72
Chapter 7 - Creating <i>Manariwa</i>	90
Concept	91
Production Elements	95
Times and Locations	95
Performance Media	95
Music	96
Costuming	96
Production Cast	97
Forms of Documentation	98
Description of Dances	100
“Bari Bari Apo”	100
“Mana Wahine”	100
“Ray”	101
“I Am Carrying Three Feathers”	101
“Indigenous Voices/Dances of Water”	101

“Standing Rock”	102
“Maglalatik”	102
“Batok/Ilaw”	103
“Hawai‘i Aloha”	103
Post-Performance Reflection	104
Reflection on Gender	105
February 10 th Performance Documentation	106
Chapter 8 - Conclusion: A Filipina Perspective on Indigenous Contemporary Dance..	111
Appendix A - “Women’s Voices/All In”	115
Appendix B - Interview Transcript: Paul Morales.....	117
Appendix C - Interview Transcript: UP Dance Students — Japhet Mari “JM” Cabling, Honey Lynn Juntilla, Angela Baguilat	128
Appendix D - <i>Fanhasso</i> Performance Flyer	140
Appendix E - I Moving Lab, Moloka‘i Performance Flyer	141
Appendix F - <i>Manariwa: Part 1</i> Performance Flyer	142
Appendix G - <i>Manariwa: Part 2</i> Performance Flyer	143
Appendix H - <i>Manariwa: Part 2</i> Performance Link	144
Appendix I - Ray Kalani Pascual, Post-Performance Reflection	145
Appendix J - Preliminary IDF Program Draft	147
Bibliography	153

LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1: Eisa Jocson performing *Stainless Borders*.
- Figure 2: Jocson performing *Up*.
- Figure 3: Photo courtesy of Salvie Makiling.
- Figure 4: Concluding circle with Karen Mosko closing the event.
- Figure 5: IDF Opening activities.
- Figure 6: Michael and Karen Mosko.
- Figure 7: Dancers Bianca Hyslop, Allison Lehuanani DeFranco, Marya Wethers, Jasmin Canuel, Sammay Dizon performing the Mitimiti water dance.
- Figure 8: Grace Elaine Osborne, Mark Mauikānehoalani Lovell, Alison Lehuanani DeFranco during the post-show panel.
- Figure 9: The author speaking during the post-show panel.
- Figure 10: Statement during the closing ceremony of FestPac.
- Figure 11: The Azotea.
- Figure 12: Rehearsal space, the Ypao Soundshell.
- Figure 13: Alethea Bordallo and Russchel Seballos Blas performing with bandage nets. *Fanhasso* at GAX.
- Figure 14: Alethea Bordallo and the author during rehearsal. Dancing with a net.
- Figure 15: Roquin-Jon Siongco-Quichocho, Roldy Aguero Ablao, Alethea Bordallo, and the author improvising in Lasso' Fuha.
- Figure 16: Roldy Aguero Ablao at Lasso' Fuha.
- Figure 17: Closing ceremony during the 12th Festival of Pacific Arts in Guåhan.
- Figure 18: I Fanlalai'an surrounding the dancers and musicians in a circle and chanting *I Tinituhon* to conclude the performance.
- Figure 19: Muscle & Bone workshop.
- Figure 20: The author preparing for the Mitimiti Water Dance, starting as a flock of birds flew across the ocean.
- Figure 21: Alcantara-Camacho chanting *I Manmatao* as the audience walks up the ramp to enter the hall.

Figure 22: Dizon, Alcantara-Camacho, the author, and Gray performing the Goddess dance.

Figure 23: Dizon performing “Reclaim Bae.”

Figure 24: Alcantara-Camacho, Gray, the author, and Dizon *hong*i with Moloka’i community after the performance.

Figure 25: Potluck post-performance on the back deck of Kalaniana’ole Hall.

Figure 26: Pictured left to right: Alecs Mendoza, Gabrielle Remy, Cecilia Mendoza, the author, Sendy Mendoza, Axcel Lopez playing an impromptu mimic game.

Figure 27: From left to right: Ian Lagrimas, Joseph Bisenio, unclear, Jhuvil Verango, Robin Orbita, unclear, Johnces Bisenio, unclear, Harley Camposano, Mario Labrador. Departing party in front of Uncle Eugene and family’s home.

Figure 28: Celebration in front of Uncle Eugene and family’s home.

Figure 29: Dyna Paulino and Denise Marcelo teaching the author the dance, Indaya Tadek.

Figure 30: Cordilleran tribute statue located in Igorot Park, Baguio.

Figure 31: Top row, left to right: Grace Parson, Marley Aiu, the author, Lexi Gilman, Hepsy Zhang, Pakalana Agliam, Tavehi Tafiti. Bottom row: Charessa Fryc, Kianna Dizon, Chantelle Sonoda, Ray Pascual.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Indigenous Dance Forum	IDF
Matao New Performance Project	MNPP
I Moving Lab	IML
Kayamanan Ng Lahi	KNL
University of California, Riverside	UCR
University of Hawai'i, Mānoa	UHM
University of the Philippines	UP
Asian/Pacific/American Institute	APA
New York University	NYU
Sikolohiyang Pilipino	SP
Pilipino Cultural Night	PCN

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

My name is Toni Marie Temehanaoteahi Franco Pasion. My lineages derive from Pampanga, Antipolo, and Laoag of Luzon, Philippines. I am born in Ohlone territory (San Jose, California), and raised in Tongva territory (Los Angeles, California). I now reside in Honolulu, Hawai'i. I am of Kapampangan, Tagalog, and Ilocano descent. I am a second-generation Filipina daughter and sister.

This thesis is a documentation of my developing dance lineage, conducted by navigating through various cultures and lands. This shows how dance and performance generate community gathering and cultural sustenance among multi-cultural spaces. I employ inter-generational accountability to retain, develop, and adapt cultural practices regardless of migration. In doing so, I articulate trans-national and trans-cultural perspectives. I acknowledge dominant literature-based and archival-based methodologies of research, and utilize this perspective as a departure point to additionally engage with dance and performance as cognitive ways of cultural transmission and knowledge production. I position dance as integral to the sustainability of culture, community, and natural environment. To support this position, this thesis asks in each segment: How does place inform choreo-graphy¹? How do dance and performance help build communities and sustain cultures?

Because the medium of dance is the body, dance is a practical method of understanding societies through multiple theoretical lenses. Dance and performance heightens awareness of time, space, force, and energy that in turn generates collective vitality in the given space. For example, dance has been utilized as a method of disguising indigenous martial arts practices from settler colonizers², as rituals of possession and liberation³, and to generate collective resilience after violent attacks

¹ I hyphenate *choreo-graphy* to emphasize its etymological definition: *choreo-* connoting dance, and – *graphy* connoting a process of recording.

² To name a few: Philippines and the dance “maglalatik”, Afro-Columbian-Panamanian and the cumbia dance form, and Afro-Brazilian and the practice of capoeira

³ Fanon, Frantz, Constance FARRINGTON, and Jean-Paul Sartre. *The Wretched of the Earth. Preface by*

from state law enforcement⁴. These examples of dance can be perceived to analyze colonial-settler power dynamics, gender dynamics, inter-generational collaborations, cultural practices, and details of the natural surroundings.

In my dance lineage, my formal training began in 1997 with the Philippine folk dance group Kayamanan Ng Lahi⁵ in Los Angeles, California. In 2015, I returned to participate in their 25th anniversary show entitled *Mana*. This was presented at the Aratani Theater in Downtown Los Angeles for the annual World Festival of Sacred Music⁶, as well as at the Edith Kanaka'ole Stadium for the Merrie Monarch Festival ho'ike night⁷. This performance depicted cultural parallels between various regions of the Philippines and Hawai'i. One focus of similarity was on the indigenous and communal relationships between people, animals, and the natural environment. This performance also honored the Philippine *sakada* generation of 1906 to 1946⁸, and concluded with a hula to a Philippine love song entitled *Dahil Sayo*⁹. This experience was pivotal in shaping my understanding of dance, because this reflected aspects of cultural identity that I had not always simultaneously addressed as a Filipina growing up dancing hula in California.

During this show, I met Abe Lagrimas, Jr., the musical director. In 2016, we would undergo fieldwork in the Philippines together for this thesis. Abe researched music while I researched dance. We were also mindful of the influences that family has in informing cultural and creative innovation. Therefore, meeting one another's families in Antipolo, Manila, and Nabua, and experiencing their expressions of folk dance and music were foundational to establishing a genuine approach to connect lineage, cultural identity, and artistic expression. Being inclusive of dance and music in family circles in this research allowed us to learn about ourselves in relation to our genealogies through

Jean-Paul Sartre. *Translated by Constance Farrington*. Pp. 255. Penguin Books: Harmondsworth, 1967. Print.

⁴ Standing Rock Sioux. 18 January 2017, Facebook live feed video post.

⁵ www.kayamanan.org

⁶ <http://www.festivalofsacredmusic.org/kayamanan-ng-lahi>

⁷ Lee, Kathleen. "Kayamanan Ng Lahi - Making History at the Merrie Monarch Festival." *OneFilipino Hawaii*. OneFilipino Hawaii, 25 Mar. 2015. Web.

⁸ Alcantara, Rubin R. *Sakada: Filipino Adaptation in Hawaii*. Washington, DC: U of America, 1981. Print.

⁹ This was choreographed by Kumu Keali'i Ceballos and musically arranged by Abe Lagrimas, Jr.

these mostly celebratory gatherings, rather than as temporary researchers. These experiences were foundational to establishing the integrity of our cultural innovation, and in envisioning what community and family contexts could have been like during the creation of the traditional repertoire of Philippine folk dances. For example, one of the many things I learned here was the use of circular choreo-graphic formations in performance and pedagogy to generate visceral connection between people. This is a different feeling than a linear formation and approach. Also, working between dance and music mediums was sometimes a challenge to find a common language. During the creative process of my thesis production, *Manariwa*, Abe and I learned to utilize a language of imagery and storytelling to communicate the desired visceral atmosphere and to articulate particular sensibilities.

Being in hālau hula¹⁰ has engrained my worldview of dance and natural environment as reciprocally interconnected. My hula lineage is as follows: from 2000 to 2015, I was a haumāna¹¹ of Kumu Hula Deborah Lynn Kaowililani Doody¹² and later, Kumu Hula Bernard Keali'i Ceballos¹³ in Los Angeles. In 2014, I studied with Kumu Hula Aulii Mitchell in Auckland. Studying hula in Aotearoa shifted my perspectives to engage with my Philippine heritage in an indigenous way that alleviates centralized focuses on dominant narratives of economy and labor. I have most recently danced under Kumu Hula Tony Conjugacion based in Honolulu¹⁴. Kumu Tony has gifted me with my 'inoa Hawai'i¹⁵. I have also briefly learned from Kumu Hula Noenoelani Zuttermeister¹⁶ through the University of Hawai'i, Mānoa (UHM).

Dancing and choreo-graphing with various dance groups have allowed me to observe how context shapes movement styles and forms. I have seen diverse narratives through dance referred to as entertainment, ritual, contemporary, and traditional, as well as diverse pedagogical styles of transmission. From 2011 to the

¹⁰ hula school

¹¹ student

¹² www.staugustineschool.com/halau-hula-o-imi-ike-performance-august-6-2016

¹³ Mitoma, Judy. "Hula: A Branch from Which Many Leaves Grow." *Aratani World Series*. Festival of Sacred Music, 05 February 2016. Web.

¹⁴ www.lamakusociety.com

¹⁵ Hawaiian name

¹⁶ www.manoa.hawaii.edu/music/about-us/faculty/noenoelani-zuttermeister

present day and in addition to hula, I have danced with various Tahitian, Pacific contemporary, Mexican folklorico, and danza Azteca groups. I have had opportunities to dance internationally through these groups. In 2014, I co-founded Oceania Dance at the University of California, Riverside¹⁷. For three semesters from 2015 to 2016, I continued studying Philippine dance with Wayne Mendoza at UHM. In 2014, I was introduced to indigenous contemporary dance from Māori choreographer, Jack Gray through a dance course at UCR. My developing experience with indigenous contemporary dance is when I realized how culture could be more engaged with beyond spectacle and preservation depicted on proscenium stages, truly reflective of my personal narrative, and creating innovative productions from cultural practices.

While learning how indigenous contemporary dance among the Pacific island region is being utilized for various purposes of cultural innovation and development, I recognized the value of documenting dance and performance. Dance rehearsals are embodied forms of cultural transmission. For example, during particular rehearsals, an articulation of what a movement or formation represents to a culture would be stated to manifest the culture's essence. Also, after performances, feedback from the audience's interpretations and life-changing realizations only somatically felt in an instance are examples of how dance and performance build relationships and cognitive communication. They are energetic practices for generating a sense of collective unity, cultural continuity, and vitality. In many instances, dancers and performers practice a mindset of "leaving everything at the door" before we start rehearsals. This is an example of how embodied actions aid in being mindful to uphold the integrity of the practice. While performance and movement may be overlooked in reflective articulation due to its complexity, this practice aids towards development and potential support of the Dance and Performance fields.

Currently, I observe in the university institution setting the need for expanding upon embodied and somatic methodologies. Practicing choreo-graphy and improvisational dance as a methodology expands upon a dominant focus on archived literatures. Conducting research is then a multi-sensorial experience that upholds

¹⁷ <https://highlanderlink.ucr.edu/organization/oceaniadance>

personal and community integrity. The creative production of *Manariwa* engaged with diverse artistic mediums to explore how these practices find complementarity in supporting the overarching goal of presenting dance as a methodology towards cultural innovation, particularly influenced by my experiences as a Filipina. The purpose of these diverse artistic practices was to see how inclusivity could operate in a mindful artistic production, and carry over into community building practices.

I had often come across Filipinx¹⁸ in Hawai'i, Guåhan, and the US continent not knowing how to specifically address their cultural heritage(s), or where to begin to seek for this information. Many comments state that this is too complicated to figure out, or many Filipinx are not interested in knowing. This thesis attempts to mend this identity gap by critically researching my own genealogy, documenting my narrative, and creating inter-cultural networks to aid in drawing parallels for solidarities. In turn, I intend to expand upon Philippine dance by observing and experimenting with how the natural environment informs dance and culture. I hope to strategize ways to activate relationship and accountability between people, culture, and the natural environment through dance and choreo-graphy.

My intention in contributing to the field of Philippine dance is to expand upon the repertoire of Philippine codified dances as documented by Francisca Reyes-Aquino¹⁹, and theatrically popularized by the Bayanihan Dance Company²⁰, which was a significant undertaking in its historical context, but can presently be more expanded upon in repertoire. This likens to Theodore Gonzalves's work *The Day the Dancers Stayed* in that he analyzes the evolving relationship between performance repertoire of Philippine folk dance and Pilipino Culture Night (PCN) performances organized and directed by Philippine American university students in the US continent. I am inspired by the development of *matāuranga Māori*²¹ as a Māori methodology towards research and

¹⁸ Filipinx is a reference to those of Philippine descent without normalizing binary gender systems attributed to using the "a" and the "o."

¹⁹ Aquino, Francisca Reyes. *Philippine Folk Dances*. Vol. 1-5. Manila, Philippines: F.R. Aquino, 1953-85. Print.

²⁰ www.bayanihannationaldanceco.ph/nationaltreasure.html

²¹ "Matauranga Maori is a body of knowledge that seeks to explain phenomena by drawing on concepts handed from one generation of Maori to another. accordingly, Matauranga Maori has no beginning and is

artistic, creative innovation. I approach Philippine dance as an embodied way to know ourselves in relation to social contexts, and to invoke accountability and integrity of cultural development.

I am driven by the words of Chamorro choreo-grapher and researcher, Ojeya Cruz-Banks, in reference to Pacific Dance Studies: “What are the implications of this compartmentalised framework or way of viewing history?” (Banks 33). In this statement, Banks observes compartmentalization of Chamorro dance into “neat silos” of contemporary, Spanish, and ancient categories as a reflection of fractured identities. Kenneth Gergen states, “My aim is neither to be true nor accurate in traditional terms. Rather, my hope is to offer a compelling construction of the world, an inviting vision, or a lens of understanding— all realized or embodied in relevant action. The account is not a set of marching orders, but an invitation to a dance” (Gergen xxiv-v). This thesis addresses people and dance as an embodied whole, thereby deflecting from disconnection regarding aspects of identity, but rather complementarity and connectedness.

Choreo-graphy transcribes narrative in motion and is embedded with emotion and intuition as knowledge systems. Choreo-graphy also records the somatic relationship between place and the body. While conducting the fieldwork of this thesis, I have utilized choreo-graphy as an alternative recording medium to writing. In many instances throughout my designated fieldwork time period, I created short phrases of choreo-graphies in the places I was upon. I have entitled these phrases by their place of their origin in the given moment, so as to remember the essence and connection I had in these places. I have also interwoven them into particular choreo-graphies in *Manariwa*, utilizing choreo-graphy and performance as knowledge transmission²².

IDF, *Fanhasso*, IML, and *Manariwa* have allowed me to realize common themes among the respective processes that I will address in further chapters. Reflecting upon

without end. It is constantly being enhanced and refined. Each passing generation of Maori make their own contribution to matauranga Maori. The theory, or collection of theories, with associated values and practices, has accumulated mai i te Ao Maori/from Maori beginnings and will continue to accumulate providing the whakapapa of matauranga Maori is unbroken” (Winiata, W cited in Mead, HM *Tikanga Māori: Living by Māori Values*. Huia Publishers, Wellington, 2003, pp. 320-321).

²² Link to *Manariwa* February 10, 2017 performance is located in Appendix G.

each process and event individually has been the most challenging part in organizing this thesis. However, they all have informed one another in such ways that I could not speak of without referring one to the other. Hence, this thesis shows my dance lineage continually developing by navigating through culture and diverse lands.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGIES

This thesis is an auto-ethnography of my participation in three indigenous contemporary dance productions, documenter and learner of dance in various regions of the Philippines, and as the curator of a dance performance. I engage in participatory, observational, interview, and archival research. Forms of research include: audio-recorded and e-mail interviews; journal entries in literature and video forms, field notes of dance experiences in various situations and locations, Facebook posts, newspaper articles, theater reviews, archival research of Cordilleran cultures at the University of the Philippines- Baguio campus and of Ballet Philippines at the Cultural Center of the Philippines, and various academic papers.

There are four performance documentations and a survey of dance in the Philippines this thesis. The three indigenous contemporary dance productions are: the Indigenous Dance Forum²³ (IDF), *Fanhasso* by the Matao New Performance Project²⁴ (MNPP) on Guåhan, and I Moving Lab²⁵ (IML). These experiences helped develop my framework and practice of inter-cultural collaboration through dance and performance. All three projects were organized by choreo-grapher Jack Gray and performance artist Dákot-ta Alcantara-Camacho, and therefore respectively had continuity in the development of each project. Gray is of Ngati Porou, Ngapuhi, Te Rarawa, Ngati Kahungunu tribal lineages. Alcantara-Camacho is of Matao and Ilocano lineages from Mongmong, Tomhom, Hagå'-ña, and Vigan. I then document my experiences surveying dance in Antipolo, Manila, Nabua, Laoag, and Baguio, Philippines. This was conducted specifically to observe understandings of dance in these regions, and to learn about my genealogy through dance through somatics as a methodology. The final documentation is a performance I curated entitled *Manariwa*. This performance was a visual

²³www.apa.nyu.edu/event/indigenous-dance-forum

²⁴www.facebook.com/MataoNewPerformanceProject

²⁵www.infinitedakota.com/iml

presentation of my fieldwork experiences, and how I processed my navigation of self in relation to dance, culture, and lands once I returned to UHM.

I choose to write from an auto-ethnographic standpoint because telling my personal narrative positions the researcher as the subject of research²⁶. Auto-ethnography merges my lenses as a dancer, performer, Filipina, daughter, and sister. As a performer, this methodology challenges me to verbally articulate my performance experiences in a way that invokes similar sensibilities of performance through literature. Staci Holman Jones states that auto-ethnography "...aspire[s] to purposeful and tension-filled 'self-investigation' of an author's (and a reader's) role in a context, a situation, or a social world" (Jones 767). This relates to Danny Butt and Lynette Hunter's arguments for cognitive methodologies. By choosing to write with an auto-ethnographic form, I am interested in focusing on a way of being rather than an objective conclusion. In this way, more questions may arise rather than answers. To inform a way of being, I present the situation through vivid imagery and performance, so that the reader may see my thought process, but also may formulate their own perceptions.

I utilize a practice-as-research approach in addition to auto-ethnography because I continually test my theories and lessons in practical forms of dance and performance settings. Engagement with communities is necessary to ensure that this research is applicable and relatable to genuine community development. This also balances my archival research with face-to-face communication, upholding research integrity in dance, performance, culture, and community. For example, practice-as-research was integral in the production of *Manariwa* to see how the practices I learned as a dancer and traveller in Mannahatta (Manhattan), Guåhan (Guam), the Philippines, and various islands of Hawai'i could apply to my daily community once I returned to UHM.

IDF is described as "...part community activation, part performance ritual, and part forum" (A/P/A). This event was the culminating performance of Jack Gray, Asian/Pacific/American Institute's Spring 2016 Artist-In-Residence. Gray was the Set-

²⁶ Denshire, Sally. "On Auto-ethnography." *Current Sociology* 62.6 (2014): 831-50. Web.

Director and Choreographer of this final event. This event occurred on April 21, 2016 in Dixon Place Theater located in Mannahatta, Lenapehoking (Manhattan, New York). This performance “implored us to find a way to create and articulate a deeper sense of connection to the place Mannahatta” (A/PA). Dancers of this production were: Dākot-ta Alcantara Camacho, Bianca Hyslop, Jasmin Canuel, Marya Wethers, Samantha “Sammay” Dizon, Alison Lehuanani DeFranco, Alec Lichtenberg, Dorine Hoeksema, and Christian Anarys. Cultural collaborators were: Jennae Flores, Kaina Quenga, Gibran Raya, Mária Regina Firmino Castillo, and Tohil Fidel Brito Bernal. Musicians were: Dākot-ta Alcantara Camacho, Grace Osborne, Jerome Kavanagh, Tecumseh Ceaser, Abe Lagrimas, Jr., and Ariana Lauren. Ruth Woodbury and Rosanna Raymond created the adornments. Mark Mauikānehoalani Lovell and I were present and involved with this production from April 17 to 21, 2016, and were invited to participate as forum scholars, and joined as dancers once we arrived to rehearsals. I documented this event through journal entries. I conducted two e-mail interviews with Lunaape language teacher Karen Mosko post-performance, and compiled various sources of online promotion and documentation by A/P/A. I also looked through various reflective Facebook posts of the participants of the event post-performance. A preliminary program draft of this event is located as Appendix J.

The Matao New Performance Project is described as “... a contemporary multi-arts performance organization inspired by Chamorro knowledge, stories and community in Guam” (Martinez). *Fanhasso* was the MNPP’s first contemporary dance production, and debuted during the 12th Festival of the Pacific Arts on Guåhan on June 3, 2016. MNPP was founded by Dākot-ta Alcantara-Camacho. *Fanhasso* was performed at the Azotea in the Plaza de España. The dancers were: Dākot-ta Alcantara-Camacho (Matao; Mongmong, Tomhom, Hagå’ña; Ilocano; Vigan), Alethea Bordallo (Chamorro²⁷; Barrigada, Guåhan), Roldy Aguero Ablao (Chamoru; Yoña, Guåhan), Roquin-Jon Quichocho Siongco (Chamoru; Yigo, Guåhan), Jeannae Flores (Chamorro; Papago, Saipan), and me. Jack Gray was the choreo-graphic advisor. The performance included

esteemed collaborators: Guåhan chant group I Fanlalai'an; master Taonga Puoro artists Horomona Horo²⁸ and James Webster²⁹; and Chamorro musician Primitiva Muna. My participation in the production of this piece was from May 17 to June 5, 2016. The production was performed on June 3, 2016. I document my experience as a dancer through various journal entries. I also consider and utilize oral stories and the chant / *Tinituhon*, photography, Facebook posts, newspaper promotion, and various academic papers as documentation and meaning-making of this event.

I Moving Lab is described as a “travelling consortium that brings cultural practitioners, community advocates and artists of different nations to Hawai‘i to present a series of public workshops, artist talks, community activations, nature site visits and performances” (Infinite Dākot-ta). IML was from November 7 to November 20, 2016. This artist ensemble traveled through O‘ahu, Big Island Hawai‘i, Maui, and Moloka‘i. This thesis will focus on the final workshop-performance on Moloka‘i. Members were: Jack Gray, Dākot-ta Alcantara-Camacho, Samantha “Sammay” Dizon (Bicol, Kapampangan, Ilokano, Philippines), Marya Wethers (Turtle Island), Kristi Keanuenuēpi‘olaniku‘uleialoha “Kea” Kapahua (Kalapana, Kona, Hawai‘i; China; Indiana, US; Denmark, Sweden, England), and me³⁰. I document my experience with IML as a dancer through journal entries, photography, various online promotional websites, and Facebook posts.

I then conduct a survey of dance in Antipolo, Manila, Nabua, Laoag, and Baguio, Philippines from June 5 to August 3, 2016. This survey researched my genealogy through dance and in the Philippines, and therefore was inclusive of dance in familial, communal, and professional sectors. I attended the Dance.MNL Conference in Pasay City, Manila, two *pangalay* dance practices with the Alunalun Dance Circle under the direction of Ligaya Fernando-Amilbangsa, and a private lesson of Tingguian dances at the Nueva Era Eco Cultural Center, taught by Dyna Grace Aguinaldo Paulino and

²⁸ www.horomonahoro.com/

²⁹ www.tahaa.co.nz/biography-mainmenu-38.html

³⁰ I asked each dancer for their name spelling, ethnicity, and place(s) of heritage. I have transcribed them in the way they were presented to me.

Denise Marcelo. I also interviewed Artistic Director of Ballet Philippines, Paul Morales, and an alumni and a current undergraduate student of Dance at the University of the Philippines, Diliman: Japhet Mari “JM” Cabling and Honey Lynn Juntilla, accompanied by Associate Professor Angela Baguilat. These interviews were audio-recorded and transcriptions are located in Appendices B and C. During this survey of dance, I documented through journal entries, photography, and video. I also conducted archival research of Cordilleran cultures at the University of the Philippines- Baguio campus and of Ballet Philippines at the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

The concluding documentation of this thesis shows how I experiment with processes and ideas I learned from these fieldwork experiences, and crafted in the production entitled *Manariwa*. This production’s consecutive creative process was from January 6 to February 10, 2017. There were two performances. One was on February 3, 2017 at the UHM Dance Studio, and the second was on February 10, 2017 at Hālau O Haumea. This production was an inter-cultural collaboration among UHM student dancers, and focused on critically engaging with Philippine culture through dance and performance. *Manariwa* was inclusive of diverse cultural backgrounds to experiment with how an inter-cultural community can come together to share creative ideas inspired by Philippine culture. My goal in this creative process was not to solely draw from imagination, but from embodied memory, thereby emphasizing choreo-graphy as somatic movement documentation. Dancers of this production were Marley Aiu, Kianna-Miel P. Dizon, Charessa Fryc, Lexi Gilman, Ray Kalani Pascual, Grace Parson, Chantelle Sonoda, Tavehi Tafiti, Hepsy Yue Zhang, and me. The musicians were Abe Lagrimas Jr., Reggie Padilla, Randy Wong, Pakalana Agliam, and Marley Aiu. I have documented this process with journal entries, photography, and video recordings of rehearsals. Promotional flyers and a videolink of the February 10th performance are located as Appendices F to H. A post-performance reflection by Ray Kalani Pascual is also located in Appendix I.

I also refer to my previous dance and performance experience as referenced in the introduction chapter. These experiences are critical in shaping my worldview, and in teaching me how to engage with dance as a cultural and cognitive methodology.

Rehearsals, performances, and gatherings are forms of knowledge transmission that have continued to sophisticate as I grew up, and were how I began learning culture prior to reading literatures. Therefore, I engage with these dance and performance experiences as inter-generational oral and movement knowledge transmissions.

I engage with intersectionality, Ethnic Studies, and Dance Studies lenses to inform autoethnographic and practice-as-research methodologies. I also utilize personal narrative to locate myself in these lenses. Intersectionality and Ethnic Studies provide the tools to see how racism and sexism maintain themselves in social structures. Dance Studies articulates how dance has been a tool for upliftment and collectivity for people of all cultures. I have experienced double standards as a woman of color, which has motivated me to find parallels of experience to strategize solidarity. Particularly as a Filipina growing up in California, I learned Philippine history as an elective in college. Therefore, my upbringing with my family and dance groups taught me Pacific and Philippine histories through cultural practice and performance. My hope is that these particularities will serve towards peace-building and empowering heterogeneous and tolerant communities. By bridging these lenses together, I utilize dance as a tool for healing social divisions.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE, PERFORMANCE, AND MEDIA REVIEW

I position my research in a space of accessibility, practicality, and community. In doing so, I bring into conversation writers who articulate cultural practices, and continually work both within and outside of university academics. Lane Wilcken and Virgil Apostol utilize various mediums of art and cultural practice to inform creative continuum between the past and the present from a Philippine standpoint. This involves continuously (rhythmically) setting up and creating spaces to enact their cultural practices. They both reside on the continental U.S. Lane Wilcken's book *The Forgotten Children of Maui* brings together pre-colonial stories, places, and symbols of the Philippines that reference an ancient and significant ancestor well known to Pacific cultures, Maui. Despite Maui's various names, Wilcken juxtaposes these stories and extrapolates common themes between various regions of the Philippines, as well as with various Pacific cultures. He is a *mambabatok*³¹ whose lineage of practice stems from Hawaiian *kākau uhi* practitioner Keone Nunes and Kalinga *mambabatok*³², Apo Whang-Od. *Way of the Ancient Healer: Sacred Teachings from the Philippine Ancestral Traditions* by Virgil Mayor Apostol documents pre-colonial, Ilocano holistic and natural practices of healing. I resonate with parallels in regards to setting space for creative indigenous practices, navigating through diaspora as a Filipina, ceremony to activate relationship with ancestors and natural surroundings of time and space, and heightened awarenesses as a choreo-grapher and dancer.

Practicing dance in and of the Philippines has been utilized as a medium to generate community, physically and energetically harness indigenous spirituality, and to critically approach gender and communal social dynamics. Practice and theory inform one another through dance. Therefore the auto-ethnographic, participatory, historical and theoretical writings of Basilio Esteban S. Villaruz, Myra Beltran, Father Albert E.

³¹ hand-tapped tattooist

³² Both *kākau uhi* and *mambabatok* refer to hand-tapped tattooists of respectively Hawaiian and Kalinga cultures.

Alejo, Declan Patrick, and Sally Ann Ness provide multiple lenses of contexts through their experiential narratives of dance. These narratives display dance in and of the Philippines as innovating and adapting, documenting how dance manifests through situations of cultural renewal and growth. Villaruz is a renown dancer, professor, and dance historian of the Philippines. His documentations and instruction have immensely aided in the development of dance in the academic and international spheres. He also designed the University of the Philippines' Dance program. Many of his texts provide dance lineages in and of the Philippines, while addressing suggestions for potential developments. Beltran's auto-ethnographic writing explores courageous expression through modern dance. Her text "The Dance Artist as Babaylan" links spiritual connection and movement exploration, and references the *babaylan* as an empowering indigenous feminine influence to her movement. These two figures have aided in affirming a lineage and continuum of ballet and modern dance in the Philippines, and representation of Philippine culture through choreo-graphy. Ligaya Fernando-Amilbagsa is recognized as one of the recipients of the 2015 Ramon Magsaysay Award³³ for her lifelong work in promoting the dance form *pangalay*. Her book *Pangalay* details this dance form of the Sulu archipelago in various elements of performance, historical background, and transmission. Also documenting indigenous dance and movements in the Philippines, Father Alejo narrates the emergence of dance and music in the Tudok tribe's family reunions as cultural re-generation in his book *Generating Energies in Mount Apo*. Father Alejo documented the Tudok movement as they collectivized to reclaim their ancestral lands. This was done to combat construction of a government-funded geothermal energy plant. All of these authors reflect diverse facets of Philippine dance, in turn a heterogeneous presence of dance and their purposes within the Philippines and abroad. I bring these authors into conversation to be mindful of potential intersections between purposes of dance and finding similarities between one another that may be beneficial towards the Philippine dance field.

Artistic methodologies engage with subjectivity and cognition as decolonial research practices. Various writings by art researcher, Danny Butt addresses the

³³www.rmaf.org.ph/newrmaf/main/awardees/awardee/profile/359

practice of art as a methodology. He notes a lack of cognitive senses in methodologies that have discredited the use of other forms of knowledges outside of written texts. In a keynote address on “Reflexivity and ‘knowledge transfer in postcolonial practice-based research”, Butt addresses unequal power dynamics in the field of university academic research, and the potential for inclusion of various narratives to continually update archival research. He also notes the increase of indigenous anthropological auto-ethnographic accounts; the practice of research as participatory and as an active verb, as opposed to the noun form of research that emphasizes observance and separation. Butt’s research speaks to the in-between, liminal identities, and the indigenous and colonial histories embedded in discussing these identities. Dance and performance as methodologies also activate cognitive sensibilities as a way to inform knowledge production. Lynette Hunter emphasizes process over objective conclusions in practicing research. Hunter provides a framework of terminology to apply towards fluid research between disciplines of separation in institutional settings, thereby cultivating a language of documentation to verbally articulate a continuum of creation. Hunter also defines *situated research*, emphasizing specific contexts of events, peoples, and places. These researchers and their works encourage continuity by venturing liminalities and subjectivity. I resonate with these approaches by portraying various points of mobility as a continual process. I also observe similar themes of creative continuity as a connective thread.

Acts of decolonizing psychology have been developed through identifying Philippine experience and labeling them to create sources of reference. This has been conducted by practicing one’s native language, and by having language inform ethical standards of research based on the terms of the native people. Virgilio G. Enriquez is known as the father of Philippine psychology, or *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*. SP was formally developed throughout the 1960s and focuses on the Tagalog dialect. SP provides reference for theorizing decolonization of American institutionalization and colonial mentality among Filipinx. Leny Strobel builds upon Enriquez’s research methods by implicating a process of self-decolonization in the text *Coming Full Circle*. The anthology *Babaylan* is a compilation of narratives of decolonization and resurgence of the

indigenous pre-colonial Filipina leaders and healers-- the *babaylan*. Strobel also addresses the search and cultivation of cultural identity among Filipinx as the “born-again Filipino³⁴.” *Kapwa* by Katrin de Guia intertwines spirituality, creative innovation, and Philippine cultural values. Theories of decolonization and cultural values are necessary components in generating a mindset stated in the introduction as “leaving everything at the door.” This refers to dis-assembling and identifying the conditioned relationship of societal influences upon the movement and perceptions of the body-- a component that is necessary in exploring movement possibilities through choreography.

Qwo-Li Driskill, Declan Patrick, and Sally Ann Ness engage with embodied, performance-based methodologies that inform decolonial, feminist and inter-cultural lenses. Driskill’s experience of learning and singing songs that had diminished in practice due to power dynamics enacted through colonization, states:

“As someone who did not grow up speaking my language or any traditional songs and who is currently in the process of reclaiming those traditions - as are many Native people in North America - the process of relearning this lullaby was and is integral to my own decolonial process. The performance context provided me an opportunity to relearn and perform a traditional song, a major act in intergenerational healing and cultural continuance.” (Driskill 164)

Through this example, Driskill works through decolonization by employing intuition, and cultural practices of singing and performance. Patrick’s work “Filipino folk dance in the academy: embodied research in the work of Francesca Reyes Aquino, Sally Ann Ness, and Benildanze” investigates parallels of European colonialism between Aotearoa New Zealand and the Philippines through his experience in performing and directing Philippine folk dance. He was former Artistic Director for the prestigious Philippine dance troupe Benildanze. Ness has contributed volumes of anthropological sources on Philippine dance aesthetic, the Philippine body, and culture from a participatory

³⁴ The “Born-Again Filipino” refers to a Filipino located in the US, who becomes interested in learning and understanding indigenous Philippine culture and psychology, and is consciously involved in how to embody these processes as a part of forming their cultural identity.

standpoint. These authors display how cultural songs and dances can be utilized to understand and, in particular circumstances, revive cultural worldviews. These also portray how decolonial acts are enacted through various artistic mediums.

Performance art and dance performances from Filipinx located outside of the Philippines display visual and somatic messages of Philippine social, global, cultural, and economic navigation, in relation to the social, historical, and indigenous lands they are upon. Themes include immigrant marginalization and adaptability as navigated and critiqued through practices of performing arts. Filipina performance artist Eisa Jocson's work challenges subjugated social and economic positionings in a globalized context, and explores body capital as employed for social mobility. Particularly, her performance works *Up* and *Stainless Borders* utilize the architectural steel pole to bring into conversation architecture and body control. Jocson's performances unsettle patriarchal paradigms that craft an unequal power dynamic between male and women bodies. Theodore Gonzalves provides a historical perspective on the parallel between the development of Pilipino Cultural Night (PCN) performances among Philippine student organizations, and how these groups continue to create cultural platforms to collectivize in university settings throughout continental U.S. These sources show how performance and the Philippine body are mediums for social change.

Mapping and choreo-graphing histories involve approaching history by activating empathy, piecing narratives together, and figuring out how they relate to the present day context. Susan Leigh Foster states on choreo-graphing histories: "Once the historian's body recognizes value and meaning in kinesthesia, it cannot dis-animate the physical action of past bodies it has begun to sense" (Foster 7). Here, Foster speaks on empathetic sensibilities towards people and events in history. Foster also speaks on a participatory approach to history, and a conception of time that resonates with Māori scholar and musician Te Ahukamarū Charles Royal's description of memory and oral culture. Royal states: "Memory is not distinct from cognition; Memory is conscious awareness (te hīringa i te mahara); Memory is not solely concerned with retaining knowledge of past events" (Royal 2005 15). This definition of memory as an embodiment of present, future, and past enlivens history as a genealogy of events.

An example of this conception of memory is a short play I participated in entitled “E Ola, E Ola Ka Mō‘ī” by Kaha‘i Sueoka and Kumu Hula Vicky Takamine Holt. The play’s process and performances were from September to November 2016. This was performed for the UHM Dance show *Memory House: Dreams*. The opening day of November 11th was also the anniversary of Queen Lili‘uokalani’s death. “E Ola, E Ola Ka Mō‘ī” involved performing a re-staging of Queen Lili‘uokalani and the event of her imprisonment through theatrical play, hula, and visual media forms. Here, performance was utilized to activate memory of Hawaiian history by connecting the time frame with the significant places mentioned in the play, all located within proximity to the performance location, Kennedy Theatre. This project was also restaged for an event entitled Mo‘olelo Festival that took place in the Doris Duke Theater on January 30, 2017³⁵.

My practice-as-research experience through IDF, *Fanhasso*, IML, a survey of dance in Antipolo, Manila, Nabua, Laoag, and Baguio, as well as the production of *Manariwa* document how collaboration, performance, and situated experiences are relational. This includes my previous dance and performance experience as noted in the introduction.

My reflective preparations prior to undergoing this fieldwork to gain a better understanding of Philippine dance was firstly to analyze the very labels *Filipino* and *dance*. I had grappled with this Filipino/Philippine/Filipina identity question for many years, and so being in the Philippines to formulate and articulate a concise understanding of what this is was integral. I had to go to the source. Cultivating connection to lands of heritage is significant to understanding the relationship between identity, culture, and people from previous generations. There are at least two widely recognized conceptions of Philippine cultural identity. One is regional and provincial identity. The other is national identity. Regions differ in their association of Philippine identity. For example, the Cordillera Administrative Region is the only landlocked region of the Philippines. Mindanao too has a significant relationship to the title of *Philippines*. Mindanao was not defeated by Spain. Cavite has a different experience with the

³⁵www.hawaiiancouncil.org/2704-2

concept of Philippine nationhood. Cavite is recognized for its Philippine nationalism because of the city's recognition as the home of the Katipunan revolutionary hero Andres Bonifacio, and many significant events of revolution and gathering that occurred here. In a personal conversation, Filipino food and history researcher Ige Ramos stated, "I am Filipino first, and Caviteño second" (Ramos). In Cavite, I realized that conceptions of *Filipino* and *nationhood* were conceived in efforts to unify for strategizing against the Spanish occupation.

I refer to *indigenous* as a way of being that practices the relationship between people and the natural environment. This de-centers anthropocentrism by focusing on balancing relationship between human and place. The word *indigenous* is an English language word that is contested due to its construction to distinguish *colonizer*, *settler*, and *native*, thereby creating a power dynamic that I have become particular of regarding fatalist verbiage of indigenous practices in today's fast paced technology. Charles Royal and Hawaiian researcher Manulani Meyer utilize the word *indigenous* to refer to unification, while also speaking from distinctive experiences and cultural identities. Royal states *indigenous* as: "...those cultures whose worldviews place special significance or weight behind the idea of the unification of the human community with the natural world." (Royal 2002 29). *Indigenous* is not homogeneous, but rather finds wholeness in difference. *Indigenous contemporary* then shows how indigenous identity is prevalent in the present day. In a Facebook post, Jack Gray states, "being indigenous means that we are constantly in a state of research and development, as we uncover, explore, examine, sift through, gather, analyze and choose. This takes on so many levels and has so many names in so many cultures, that whether we proceed spirally or horizontally - we are constantly innovating a progression. In any and all directions" (Gray. 6 December 2016. Facebook). Royal also proposes shifting a colonial and divisive focus of *indigeneity* towards unifying:

"There seems to be a general agreement among 'indigenous' peoples the world over, whether Māori, Hawaiian, African, Native American and so on, that unification with the world is the primary concern of the worldviews contained

within their traditional knowledge. I propose that we commence there in our discussions” (Royal 2002 29).

I also consider the role of mobility in indigeneity, and how this has created a perceived conception of division between diaspora and indigenous peoples, regardless of the same ethnic background. Push and pull factors regarding immigration, social, political, and economic contexts are dominant themes in Asian American Studies. I propose that push-pull factors adhering to globalization values and frameworks can be perceived as mappings of indigenous mobilities. 20th and 21st century push-pull factors due to lack of resources and being in search for more opportunities are similar reasons for indigenous migrations as referred to in oral traditions. Themes of adaptability and survival are prevalent in Indigenous Studies, partly pertaining to origins and initial arrivals upon a body of land. However, 20th and 21st century indigenous migrations navigate through differing socioeconomic, geopolitical contextual factors affected by a rapid pace of technological advances and mobile accessibility. With this understanding, all peoples have a culture and lineage, no matter how far removed or forgotten one believes oneself to be.

By considering this variety of authors, artists, terminology, and methodologies, I perceive diversity as a communal strength that challenges us to see how differing aspects are critical components of a sustainably diverse community. My hope for dance in all communities is to practice and verbalize inter-disciplinary possibilities beyond entertainment, so that indigenous cultures may sustain their practices and worldviews. In the university setting, I encourage dance in collaboration between other departments and curriculums. An example of this would be to investigate health, wellness, and the anatomy of the human body through the biomechanics and practice of dance. As a cultural methodology, dance can cultivate indigenous relationship between place, culture, and land. This relates to understanding cultural values such as reciprocity, *kapwa*³⁶, and aloha ‘aina, in practical ways. Therefore, utilizing dance to cultivate the relationship between human and place can expand one’s understanding of

³⁶ Tagalog for “self in the other”

accountability in caring for the natural environment and community, and prioritizing sustainable practices and co-existence.

CHAPTER 4

SHAPE-SHIFTING BODIES AND ARCHITECTURES

This chapter serves as a portal by exploring various performance works of Filipina performance artist Eisa Jocson and dancer Salvie Lou Makiling, and their pole dance pieces and practices. I analyze how both artists utilize dance and performance to unsettle the patriarchal gaze upon the Filipina body. Jocson approaches the act of unsettling through the performances *Stainless Borders: The Deconstruction of Architectures of Control* and *Up*. Makiling approaches this by maintaining her pole practice to fully express and empower herself as an indigenous Filipina located in Long Beach, California. In this chapter, I present how Makiling and Jocson unsettle negative connotations of female bodies by analyzing their various spatial contexts of pole performance and upbringing.

The nature of pole dancing is to climb upward, reach the top, rescind downwards, and do this repetitively while making this look effortless. Néstor García Canclini states cultural transformation as "...generated by the horizontal co-existence of a number of symbolic systems" (Canclini 32). Jose Muñoz states that identity and performance are "produced at the point of contact between essential understandings of self (fixed dispositions) and socially constructed narratives of self" (Muñoz 6). Pole dancing's repetitive process of verticality and transcending horizontal structure activates transformation. With such frequent changes in eye level, movement, music, and elements among the surroundings, poling physically transcends horizontal space and social constructs.

According to her website, Jocson "investigates the labour and representations of the dancing body in the service industry, and exposes gender formation, seduction politics, and Filipino social mobility" (Jocson website). I analyze two of her works: *Stainless Borders: The Deconstruction of Architectures of Control* (2010) and *Up* (2012) to see how she connects a female, Philippine, and socio-economic mapping.

In *Stainless Borders: The Deconstruction of Architectures of Control*, Jocson "pole tags" steel poles in urban infrastructures of Manila, Brussels, and Sint-Niklaas.

This is conducted by initialing each zenith of the pole she climbs. Steel poles erected in the urban infrastructure are utilized as controlling signifiers of the human body. In this piece, Jocson “explores and maps the relationship between the human body and the urban landscape through movement defined by a pole dance vocabulary” (FoAM). Here, pole tagging is a methodology of mapping the body in relation to place. Pole tagging disrupts conventional metropolitan routine by engaging with the vertical dimension of architectures. A.L. Adams notes how contextual aspects of gender and place in this piece challenge audiences to re-think pole dancing stereotypes: “...the venues in which pole dancing is typically performed limit the way it’s perceived; in turn, the way it’s perceived confines it to certain venues” (Adams). Variables of this piece include the accompanied music of the urban landscape, natural elements that alter the level of ease in climbing up and down the pole, and the human’s perspective from above and on the ground differing between each pole.



Figure 1: Eisa Jocson performing *Stainless Borders*. Photo from Eisa Jocson website.

In 2012, Danzand commissioned Jocson in Osteende to create the work *Up*. This was performed on a beach that is locally known as a tourist destination, and has many

art installations and street performances. Jocson describes this piece as rebelling against the stereotype of the pole dancer and the horizontal landscape (*Paaldansen is kunst*). Her attire is black leather pants, a cropped black leather top, high stiletto heels, hair down and freely flowing, and a red scarf tied around her hips that signal the way of the wind. In this interview, she mentions the transformational process of climbing up and down. Themes of this piece include rebellion against a conventional horizontal flow of landscape and repeatedly mobilizing upwards, creating transformation through repetition.



Figure 2: Jocson performing *Up*. Photo from Eisa Jocson website.

Salvie Makiling identifies her pole dance practice as reclamation of her Filipina feminine identity that counters narratives of the coy and subtle *Maria Clara meztiza*³⁷. She relates this practice with receiving *batok* as another practice of mapping the body by activating indigenous cognizance. Makiling is a first generation Filipina currently residing in Long Beach, California. She was born in Minglanilla, Cebu, and raised between both Minglanilla and Mactan. Growing up, she frequently visited her mother's hometown, Argao, Cebu. Makiling describes her pole dance practice as spiritual, and

³⁷ *Meztizas* in the Philippines are interracial Filipina women with lighter skin complexion. Their personality traits are coy, meek, and demure. Jose Rizal has crafted the persona of these women in his novel *Noli Mi Tangere*. They are symbols of wealthy social status, and were considered ideal partners.

makes her feel closer to her Cebuano Pintado³⁸ ancestors. Her primary goal in her pole dance practice is to “spread and awaken sensuality and to empower women”, practicing an egalitarian social structure between genders (Makiling). She first started poling in 2006, and had been consistent as a pole dancer since 2012. When I asked her a significant moment in her pole dance experience, she referred to a calling from her ancestors “with a voice so loud that [she] could not ignore nor deny it.” For Makiling, pole dancing is a mental, physical, and spiritual engagement that allows her to fully express herself.

Pole dance engages both masculine and feminine energies of strength and fluidity. This simultaneous duality reflects the nature of mythic archetypes that Fraleigh addresses in *Dance and the Lived Body*. Fraleigh refers to the body as Earth and Heaven, stating, “...the vitality of art lies in its *recovery of nature*, its yin-yang meld of nature and culture.” (Fraleigh157). This quality relates to Makiling’s egalitarian ideology, approaching this through physical actions and her surroundings.

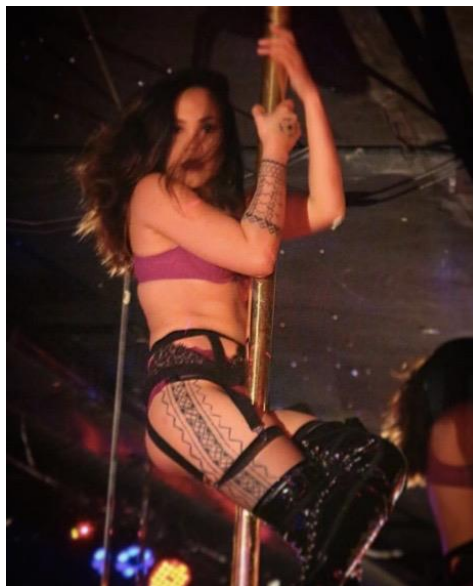


Figure 3: Photo courtesy of Salvie Makiling

³⁸ The word *pintado* translates to *painted*. The name was given to the Indigenous peoples of Cebu by Spanish colonizers to describe their bodies that were covered in *batok*. Salvie and I received our batok from Lane Wilken.

Spatial contexts affect the way people interact, how one prioritizes thoughts and actions to fulfill an intention, and the level of ease and friction one comes into contact with. In Jocson's *Up*, the outdoor beach setting makes the winds and blowing sands elements of friction. Jocson addresses the unique challenge of this outdoor setting to pole compared to an indoor setting. One being that the beach setting is vast and does not centralize the performance space as would an indoor performance space. Makiling too addresses distinctions between spatial regions of her upbringing. One of the places she addresses is Mactan. Historically, Mactan is known as the setting where Filipino warrior Lapu-Lapu killed Ferdinand Magellan. For many Filipinxs, this is a great feat, and makes Lapu-Lapu a revolutionary hero. In a personal interview, Makiling notes her upbringing between her home in the province and her school in the city. She addresses great dislike for the all-girl Catholic school upbringing. Her need to detach from Catholic ideology as constructed through the school institution structure and social surroundings increased her motivation to pole dance.

In *Stainless Borders*, Jocson documents her interactions upon different countries and their metropolitan regions. She does this by climbing up various street poles and initialing or "pole tagging" them once reaching the top. Poles in these settings are signifiers that determine body control. The outdoor setting again affects her fluid movement as she climbs vertically upwards. This piece engages audiences to question social conventions and architectures of body control. What forms of control have societies grown to perceive as convention? At what point does routine stop our critical awarenesses? How can routine continually shift to activate awareness of our social and bodily relationship with architecture and infrastructures?

In addition to spatial settings, Jocson and Makiling utilize attire to shift negative connotations of women showing bare skin. In *Stainless Borders*, Jocson's attire is conventional street clothing: a t-shirt, shorts, and sneakers. Walking down the street, she would blend in with the flow of the urban city. Her blending in appearance adds to elements of disruption when she "breaks the mold" or routine of horizontal flow among the cityscape, and decides to climb vertically up a pole.

Contrastingly in *Up*, Jocson wears leather pants, a cropped black leather top, high stiletto heels, her hair down, and a red scarf around her hips. The flow of the red scarf resembles a flag waving in the wind as she climbs up the pole. The accompanying pole in this piece is very tall and bright yellow, creating visibility in the beach setting. In an interview, Jocson describes this piece as rebelling against the pole dancer stereotype and the horizontal landscape.

Similarly to rebel against a stereotype, Makiling states that she did not identify with the physical appearance of the *Maria Clara meztiza*, and felt more resemblance with older photographs of indigenous Philippine women. Juxtaposed with depictions of older indigenous women, the *Maria Clara* bodies are covered with clothing, and generally have a lighter skin complexion. Clothing and skin complexion gradually became symbols of particular social statuses, upbringing, and accessibility to resources in Philippine cultures. In the act of pole dancing, bare skin is necessary to create friction for the body to execute the desired flow of the dance. For this reason, bare skin as a necessity to practice pole dance diminishes these social symbols by focusing on the skill and execution of the practice. Bare skin is perceived for its protective purposes, rather than a social stigma.

Through pole dance, Makiling utilizes performance to manipulate the patriarchal gaze, thereby shifting the voyeuristic power dynamic between bare skinned women and the silent spectator. Makiling uses the pole dance environment to shift her experience as a Filipina among a dominantly patriarchal and colonial social setting. She states, “I love how there is a social stigma attached [to pole dancing] and somehow it is against the norms of modern patriarchal society” (Makiling). Social dynamics upon women regarding symbols of desire constructed a pinnacle of being that she states is inaccessible and unidentifiable to her. Pole dancing appealed to her partly because dancing with bare skin and with steel poles was unacceptable in her communities, and yet skillful pole dancers empower what has been shamed to create an art requiring physical strength, resilience, and determination.

In these examples, pole dance unsettles negative connotations of female bodies and constructed power dynamics by engaging with pole architectures. Makiling’s pole

practice is a way to dis-assemble white patriarchal constructs and express her indigenous identity. Jocson's performance works unsettle conventions of routine and architectures, thereby transcending what Canclini has described as "horizontally placed symbolic structures." This allows us to strategize how performance can be utilized to shift and create an ideal social setting. In what other ways can performance be engaged to transcend constructed power dynamics among social groups? The following documentations of indigenous contemporary dance will show how different situations of how performance and dance shift social dynamics, and collectivize communities in their given surroundings.

CHAPTER 6

VIGNETTES OF INDIGENOUS CONTEMPORARY DANCE

MANNAHATTA, LENAPEHOKING: INDIGENOUS DANCE FORUM



Figure 4: Concluding circle with Karen Mosko closing the event. Photo from A/P/A Institute. 21 April 2016.

The Indigenous Dance Forum (IDF)³⁹ was the culminating performance of Jack Gray's Spring 2016 artist residency at the Asian/Pacific/American (A/P/A) Institute in New York University (NYU). This event was held on April 21, 2016 at Dixon Place⁴⁰, an experimental theater in Mannahatta. The collaborators were an array of international artists of diverse artistic mediums-- dancers, musicians, apothecaries, carvers, videographers, designers, and more. A review by Alison Cole in Theatre Review notes of the performance: "Like a true rangatira"⁴¹, Gray wove people together from across the globe, including Aotearoa, Guàhàn, Moku'āina o Hawai'i, and Lenapehoking (the First Nations territory of New York). The Native American tribes represented included Haudensaunee, Matinecock, Maya, Mexika, Munsee-Delaware, Purehpecha,

³⁹ Link to view the full IDF performance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yBCOq-QG1QU>

⁴⁰ www.dixonplace.org

⁴¹ leader

Quw'utsun', Santo Domingo Pueblo, Seneca, and Yup'ik" (Cole). This was the first Indigenous Dance Forum hosted by A/P/A.

Gray's residency was not the initial engagement between him and NYU. From 2014 to 2015, he directed Alcantara-Camacho's physical theater work *Guåhu Guåhan*⁴², performed at the University of Wisconsin for the Linebreaks Theater Festival and Indigenous Choreographers at Riverside for Alcantara-Camacho's research at NYU Tisch School of the Arts. In 2015, Gray and Alcantara-Camacho facilitated the Lenapehoking Transformance Lab⁴³. Various Transformance Labs were held in multiple US universities and in Aotearoa. The labs are described as:

"...empower[ing] the first peoples of the places [Gray and Alcantara-Camacho] are welcomed onto, ceremony and ritual become daily events and the spontaneous possibility of community engagement reveals new discoveries for all involved. Contemporary indigenous performance and protocol provide an interplay with environment, historical, creative and political factors and agenda."
(Infinite Dâkot-ta)

This further displays the ongoing and growing relationship between Gray, Alcantara-Camacho, and NYU. This also shows a continual process towards developing and nurturing relationship.

I arrived on April 18th in John F. Kennedy airport, and upon landing I went directly to drop my luggages off to my Airbnb, met with Abe Lagrimas Jr., who had flown in the night before, and went to rehearsal at Gibney Dance Choreographic Center. My stay was until April 22, 2016. I was invited as a panel speaker and a dancer, along with Hawaiian cultural advisor Mark Mauikānehoalani Lovell. We were both traveling from Honolulu. The direction given to us was as follows:

"Be all-seeing eyes, ears, heart and spirit for the work that is being created, and come in as cultural observers, listeners and activators - to contribute to the spirit that is being generated with all these amazing people present - in whatever way feels appropriate. You could be writing and taking notes of all your observation of the process (and dance making) in action as 'outsiders', to bring your sense of what's happening on different levels (dramaturgy, ceremonially, intuitively). In a way it's to be a cultural recorder as much as a translator, and transcriber."
(Gray. 13 April 2016. Personal e-mail.)

⁴²www.infinitedakota.com/guahu-guahan

⁴³www.infinitedakota.com/transformance-lab

Rehearsals and workshops had begun on April 4, 2016, and the culminating performance was on April 21, 2016. They took place from Monday through Friday, varying in running times, starting between 11AM and 12PM, and concluding between 4PM and 6PM.

“People started coming in. Dixon Place was packed. The setting became an interactive space where there were multiple activities to choose from. Some of these activities included making medicine bundles with Yup’ik artist Emily Johnson, and a listen-in on the drawings of Samoan artist from Aotearoa, now residing in Lenapehoking, Keke Brown. Ariana Lauren (Tse’ta sia Tsulattsa) was selling products from her apothecary, Quw’utsun’ Made. Some of the dancers were receiving designs drawn onto them by master Mayan artist Fidel Eduardo Brito Bernal. Hula dancer and Hawaiian organizer residing in Brooklyn and born on Moku O Keawe, Kaina Quenga, and I were walking through the crowd and offering them oil called Universal Taonga. This oil was created by alchemist Yvette Sitten and Jack in Aotearoa during preparations of Jack’s previous production, Mitimiti. Passing along this oil was one of the threads that created continuity between Jack’s home and performances across the ocean” (Pasion 23 April 2016).

Setting up the Dixon Place stage and structuring the show intended to fluidly shift energies and awarenesses of people in the space. This disrupted the expectation of entertainment and leisure, but rather was staged as an interactive space that involved the audiences to walk around, and even shift seats in the beginning of the performance. The stage had numerous stations set up for audiences to choose from. This was also an opportunity for everyone to interact with one another, audience and performers. Gray had stated to me as we were observing the interactions on the performance floor, “They came to see a performance, and little do they know, they are also the performers.”

“The layout of the show broke the fourth wall separation (audience-performer), and to me immediately emphasized the regalia that people had shown up wearing. This was a ceremony. Everyone present contributed to the pulsing and shifting energy of the place.” (Pasion)



Figure 5: IDF Opening activities. Photo from A/P/A Institute. 21 April 2016.

In addition to the interactive stations as the opening of the performance, the audience was directed to get up from their seats on the floor and to move to the chairs on the opposite side of the space. As was the nature of the creative rehearsal process, shifting stagnation and expectation continued to re-new energy and acclimate to uncertainty.

The performance segment began with a welcome and concluded with a prayer in the Lunaape language by cultural advisor Karen Mosko from Nalahii (Munsee-Delaware Nation, Ontario, Canada). She and her husband, Michael, had driven ten hours one-way from Munsee-Delaware Nation to Mannahatta to be part of this event. Karen is a Lunaape⁴⁴ language teacher of the Munsee dialect. She shares with me this experience:

“When it was time for me to speak the words that were sent to me, I paused to absorb the unfolding events. I could feel the magnitude of the realization that I was speaking the language that was used by my ancestors in the very same spot that my ancestors lived hundreds of years ago. I was honoured that they heard my prayers in such a familiar tongue. The room felt full with the spirits of my ancestors as I spoke” (Mosko).

⁴⁴ Karen shares with me: “The spelling *Lenape* isn't what we use. I was taught by our teacher that we spell it *Lunaape*. When we were colonized, the English spelled us *Lenape*. Our language is an oral language, but now we have our own alphabet system, and we spell who we are, *Lunaape*. The other dialects of our language spell it *Lenape*” (Mosko).

Karen and Michael's presence and involvement in the event was significant, because they were Lunappe recipients of this work. Karen shares with me:

"I remember Jack saying he found my contact info on the Ramapough Lunaape nation website. This was only the first or second time I put my contact info on a language class flyer to post on their website! He had been reaching out for a year and I was the only one who contacted him back. Jack said, 'I almost gave up, but then I remembered that it's not the outcome but the process. If we want to change a paradigm we have to change our own response first, so thank you for replying and affirming that our call is sometimes heard. It is all timing!' I truly believe everything happens for a reason. It's all part of Creator's plan and NOW was the perfect time for Jack to contact me" (Mosko).



Figure 6: Michael and Karen Mosko. Photo by A/P/A Institute. 21 April 2016.

Cultivating the indigenous relationship in Mannahatta during the creative process of IDF involved re-connecting and nurturing relationships between one another, honoring and reaching out to the Lunaape peoples as the first peoples of the land, gathering a like-minded community, and developing relationship with the city and landscape. Currently, Mannahatta is a socially constructed metropole recognizable as *Manhattan*, and is regarded as a primary and influential metropole in the US. This serves as a challenge in finding like-minded community, while also making it a significant place where indigenous acknowledgement and solidarities from diverse places around the world need to be cultivated. To address cultivating relationship to land and cityscape, Gray conducted the "Exploring Lenapehoking Adventure Tour." This took place on March 27, 2016. This entailed: "[setting] groups off on a multi-directional, cross-town walk, mapping the past, present, and future of Mannahatta" (A/P/A). This

was to develop site-specific knowledge of the land and cityscape. Choreo-graphy would then formulate from continual workshops investigating bodies in relation to the space, being the embodied transcription of the space.

Preparations for the culminating performance involved recording shared stories and drawings from a previous roundtable event. In a journal entry from April 23, 2016, I wrote, “We had the opportunity to get to know indigenous Manahatta, Lenapehoking/New York within and beneath the buzzing city” (Pasion). These stories would then set the blueprint for an actual walk through the city to find these places. Once these groups found these blueprinted locations, they had guidelines of ceremony to conduct, such as singing particular songs. Choreo-graphies for the culminating performance would formulate from these qualities of acquainting with Mannahatta.

During rehearsals, Gray would make references to Māori dance to help dancers visualize particular connections and realizations that he was transmitting. He was instructing us through imagery and energetic feeling. References of connections between our movements to our genealogies enlivened our conceptions of the past and history as a continuum we presently embody. This is contrary to a paradigm of mainstream US history curriculum as a biased and homogenized story in favor of European settlers being victors, and Native Americans as declining in population and health. This fatalist narrative is not truthful in portraying creative and active continuum, in turn constructing a conception of degrees of power, and power as destructive. Enlivening genealogy as continuum re-minds us of indigenous understandings of re-generation, creative impetuses, and cultural accountability. Regarding Lenapehoking, my search for background information and history on the Lunaape peoples was challenging because much of what I was finding was fatalist in verbiage. It was then that I reached out to Karen Mosko for her personal account on her experience of this production. I realized first hand the importance and necessity of documenting uplifting events and gatherings, particularly involving indigenous peoples and peoples of color. Narratives must not come from a place of fear.

“This event was about seeing the commonality in humans before getting caught up in constructing differences. We had the opportunity to get to know indigenous Mannahatta, Lenapehoking/New York within and beneath the buzzing city” (Pasion).

How does one help revitalize another culture and generate community? This is a challenging and extensive task that requires cultivating an ongoing relationship with the Lunaape peoples. Gray’s methodology and approach did not solely engage with textbook research, but rather a compilation of oral stories and experiences from people of the city-- oral transmission. This avoided the politics of biased historical texts, and challenged the conception of history as solely of the past.

The women’s water dance had been choreo-graphed during the creative process of Mitimiti, premiering in Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland) on September 30, 2015 at Q Theatre⁴⁵. Transmission of this dance across the moana⁴⁶ was another thread of continuity in the performance between Aotearoa and Turtle Island. Gray had shared with Dizon and me the original inspiration of this choreo-graphy in November 2016 during the I Moving Lab, when we were rehearsing this dance in the shore of Moloka’i behind Kalaniana’ole Hall. The dance movements are inspired by a story of Gray’s hometown, Mitimiti, where women had went into the water to lick and wash blood off of themselves after eating a human. We asked him why he had not mentioned this story before, because perhaps its performance and feeling would have been experienced differently than the initial experience of a gentle, cleansing feeling. Gray mentioned that he wanted the dancers to own and feel the movements in what felt right in their bodies. I found this an interesting choice as a choreo-grapher, and an example of cultural story transmission. Dance choreo-graphy is a story, thereby making the dancer the storyteller. The storytellers had different portrayals of the story, but all were emotive and certain of their interpretations. I learn values of humility and trust in the movements as well as the dancers’ intuition from this choreo-graphic decision.

⁴⁵ www.allevvents.in/auckland/mitimiti-premiere-season/743519392441259

⁴⁶ ocean



Figure 7: Dancers Bianca Hyslop, Allison Lehuanani DeFranco, Marya Wethers, Jasmin Canuel performing the Mitimiti water dance. Photo by A/P/A Institute. 21 April 2016.

“Everyday I reflect on bridging my hula practice with my identity as a Filipina, and so had been led to decolonial efforts through indigenous knowledges. I approach ceremony knowing that when I call upon my ancestors, I am speaking to my familial lineages of the Philippines, and those I have learned hula under. The practice of hula has informed so much of my understanding of indigenous knowledge. I grew up with hula, and it is a life and a spirit of its own.

What a better place it would be if we were to focus on our respected commonalities over constructed differences. It wastes so much time and energy in focusing on competing differences, when the energy that happens in connectivity between humanity and the environment surpasses containment from building walls between one another. This event was the ‘official’ beginning of my thesis ‘fieldwork’” (Pasion).

Collaboration and inclusion were instrumental and necessary for a genuine solidarity platform to be created. Also, transcending socially constructed categories and labels was imperative in the effectiveness of collaboration, as well as an act of decolonization. In the article “Manaakitanga in Motion”, Gray writes to friend and dance researcher, Jacqueline Shea Murphy after performing in Blakdance 2012 in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia: “I now believe it is important/imperative to not isolate indigenous and non indigenous, as it is not the reality of the world anymore. We HAVE to live together and to do so requires a giving up of the ownership of pain that was caused through colonising ways and means in the past” (Gray and Murphy 265). Building from

this understanding of inclusion, the IDF was spiritually, energetically, and viscerally, a gesture of trans-indigenous solidarity, in the understanding of Royal's statements of indigenous as unification and advocacy.

Another example of collaboration and inclusion was the open and transparent creative process. Rehearsals were open to the public. Various dancers of the production also conducted open movement workshops⁴⁷. There was a continual flux and flow from different people coming in and out of rehearsals. Whether it was to just watch and be present in the working space, to sit among the space and continue on with their work, to contribute artistically through numerous artistic talents, everyone present had their own intentions and reasons for being there, and were welcomed. In the post-show talk of *Manariwa*, I stated that one of the lessons I learned was to trust my intuition, as well as everyone else's. The presence of each body enlivened the constant practice of re-cognizing that each person presents a life story and a journey, therefore refreshing a genuine understanding of one another's relationship to one another. Regular opportunities for a genuine quality of acknowledgement and relationship to one another are necessary, especially in the metropolitan lifestyle and cityscape of the present day Mannahatta.

During the after-show panel discussion, an audience member had asked what good indigenous contemporary dance is doing for the various indigenous peoples throughout the world who are losing their lives due to persecutions and injustices. Hawai'i representative of the panel, Mark, answered this question stating that one of the issues we must challenge is building upon social constructs of differences between humans based on race. He shared with the audience his experience in being a haumāna of multiple Hawaiian cultural practices, as well as being a Masters degree graduate who had defended his thesis at Cambridge University, and noted that both indigenous and the university ways of knowing are rigorous and respectable in their own

⁴⁷ This series was entitled "Dances with Wolves: Indigenous Contemporary Dance Masterclasses." Workshops were instructed by Jack Gray, and guest artists from Alaska (Emily Johnson), Philippines (Sammay Dizon), and Aotearoa (Louise Potiki Bryant, Jasmin Canuel, and Bianca Hyslop). This was from Monday, April 4-Friday, April 8, 2016. apa.nyu.edu/event/dances-with-wolves-indigenous-contemporary-dance-masterclasses

right. Mark shifted the focus on dissecting and analyzing the differences among people to utilize these differences to build our strengths in collaboration.



Figure 8: Grace Elaine Osborne, Mark Mauikānehoalani Lovell, Alison Lehuani DeFranco during the post-show panel. Photo from A/P/A Institute. 21 April 2016.



Figure 9: The author speaking during the post-show panel. Photo from A/P/A Institute. 21 April 2016.

The IDF was this platform that brought people and cultures together to acknowledge the Lunaape peoples through indigenous contemporary dance and its creative process, conducted from a Māori cultural worldview. This event and collaboration is unprecedented for A/P/A, and its significance in building community with

the intent of Lunaape re-cognition was a shift in inclusive gathering to recognize collaborative strength and genuine giving. Royal speaks of utilizing creative methods inspired by *mātauranga Māori*⁴⁸ to find “an appropriate relationship between social justice, cultural restoration and creativity” (Royal 2007 2). Decolonization that is cultivated through cultural innovation, rooted in indigenous knowledges, and that engages with a trans-indigenous collaborative method informs efforts to help indigenous peoples throughout the world by continuing to develop pre-colonial knowledges and paradigms. This is conducted in efforts for indigenous peoples to utilize their cultural paradigms under their own terms, rather than from perspectives of Western⁴⁹ progress by decaying cultural remnants. African American writer, Audre Lorde, states “...the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change” (Lorde). This statement is similar to shifting the focus from the violent initial engagement of colonial contact and its rippling bonds, to the ancient practices and worldviews that have survived, and that continue to develop and sustain, and even pose solutions to the contemporary injustices and environmental issues.

IDF created indigenous solidarities with the Lunaape peoples. I saw and experienced how various art forms and the nature of contemporary (in reference to time) enable indigenous peoples to engage with Charles Royal’s articulation of *memory* as encompassing of past, present, and future. Royal also states, “We should not be afraid of our imagination when thinking about the potential applications and innovations that might be possible when using mātauranga Māori. Let us be courageous and innovative, not undermining or diminishing in the least, the creativity of the past” (Royal 2007 1). Being that Gray had worked with Royal on his dissertation *Te Whare Tapere*, Gray is familiar with Royal’s processes and interpretations of mātauranga Māori, and therefore employs his own research in contributing to its expansion. Contemporary expressions from indigenous artists bring into consideration indigenous mobilities, and combat perceptions of indigeneity as solely of the past. IDF allows us to question what

⁴⁸ Māori creative process and knowledge

⁴⁹ I utilize the term *Western* as connoted in Edward Said’s *Orientalism*.

the future of indigeneity looks like, and how may this occur. This project served as a presentation to further continue developing reciprocally beneficial relationships between one another as human beings. How can spaces between the Mannahatta metropole and its indigenous earth be mended to coexist within the same conversations of development and ethics? Coexistence and equal representation will not come from one major event, but from continual efforts towards cultivating an equally receptive and representative relationship.

GUÅHAN: FANHASSO

“I use my breathe to exert my all, physically and emotionally. Also as a cue for the others that it was time for the next bit of choreo-graphy. Breath is our communication”
(Pasion 04 June 2016).

In this chapter, I document how performance and dance as methodologies enact Matao creative futurities. I do this by documenting my experience as a dancer with the Matao New Performance Project and their debut contemporary dance production *Fanhasso*, performed during the 12th Festival of the Pacific Arts on Guåhan on June 3, 2016. I analyze the US territorial relationship between Guåhan and the US as visually perceived and experienced in the locations of our outdoor rehearsals during our creative process. This is documented through both literature and choreo-graphy, articulating the body’s relationship to place in a given moment.

The Matao New Performance Project was founded by performance artist Dākot-ta Alcantara-Camacho, who is of Matao⁵⁰ and Ilocano lineages. The collective created a contemporary dance performance entitled *Fanhasso*, translating as “a command to think, to imagine, to remember⁵¹.” *Fanhasso* was performed at the Azotea in the Plaza de España. My participation in the production of this piece was from May 17 to June 5, 2016. The production was performed the night before the culmination of the 12th Festival of Pacific Arts⁵² on June 3, 2016.

The Festival of Pacific Arts is a gathering of Pacific islands that occurs every four years and hosted by a different Pacific island. The 2016 festival was hosted by Guåhan and was the first to refer to the festival as “FestPac.” This particular year, 27 islands of the Pacific region participated. This festival created a two-week platform for realizing relationships between ancestral and historical migrations throughout the Pacific through

⁵⁰ Dākot-ta shares with me that Matao is the indigenous title of the people of Guåhan, Låguas, yan Gåni. I have observed that people of Guåhan address themselves as Chamoru, Chamorro, or Matao. In this chapter and throughout this thesis, I interchange these spelling and title preferences depending on whom I am speaking of, out of respect for the title each person has introduced themselves as to me.

⁵¹ www.guampdn.com/story/life/2016/06/02/catch-contemporary-chamorro-dance-fanhasso/85229420

⁵² www.festpac.visitguam.com

artistic productions, languages, and practices; and juxtaposed visualizations and experiences of cultural similarities and differences. Co-chairs of the *Independence for Guam Task Force*, Michael Lujan Bevacqua and Victoria-Lola Leon Guerrero state: “Historically, FestPac has not only been a space for Oceanic peoples to share each other’s cultures, but also to share each other’s struggles; to discover our connections not just in our art, but also in our historical and political realities” (Bevaqua and Guerrero).

Fanhasso is a primary account of the visceral experiences of FestPac through choreo-graphy, portraying interwoven movement phrases imbued with timespace, music, attire, culture, natural surroundings, and people. One of the purposes of *Fanhasso* was to imagine new expressions and innovations from a Matao worldview. Chamorro choreo-grapher, Ojeya Cruz-Banks states, “Dissecting unidentified colonial lenses, creating and locating inspiration for indigenous creativity, embracing how culture is hybrid and influenced by diaspora, is vital and ongoing work to be done” (Cruz-Banks 29). *Fanhasso* was this statement in motion. In a personal conversation, Alcantara-Camacho states “we’re [Matao] still in the process of discovery. This is what *Fanhasso* was” (Alcantara-Camacho).

Festpac generated a concentrated, collective, and urgent atmosphere upon Guåhan that visibilized communal operations and relationships. The casts’ creative process included visceral experience and introspective articulation of our developing work in relation to Festpac. Our bodies were somatic repositories of the Festpac experience. Articulating experiences added a significant layer to the culminating performance, as we generated collective meaning in relation to our creative process. Collective meaning-making aided in developing our visceral synchronicity among one another-- a valuable connection that would help gel fragments into a flow, and develop sustaining relationships during and beyond the performance. Its relational intersections include constructed contestations of socially and culturally perceived polarities between what is contemporary and traditional, indigenous and diaspora identities, and Pacific

island nations that were “newly” accepted in the Pacific island region⁵³. At what point do the construction of labels become walls that separate people and lands from genuinely practicing reciprocity with one another, especially as they have been historically connected? What happens when we find a natural anomaly that defies the constructed label? Rather than focus on the culminating experience, I am interested in articulating and focusing on creative processes and ways of knowing, because this ensures continuity through creation and innovation. It also deflects from culminating processes as fixed answers. Articulating process emphasizes flux and flow. How can we continue to create and be inspired by our cultures?

While retaining traditional knowledges and practices is significant, I question which labels are necessary, and which inhibit creativity and collaboration. During FestPac, I observed the complex relationship of art production, culture, and politics of government compartmentalization. During the official beginning and concluding events, government-imposed division was conducted in the form of frequent language disruptions, such as verbalizing the automatic translation of speeches spoken in their native languages into French and English colonizing languages. The audiences seated around me were growing weary of these lengthy translations, and questioning its necessity. Various island nations, such as Hawai’i and Aotearoa, addressed the host island by its indigenous name *Guåhan*, rather than *Guam*. Others, even those of political standing on Guåhan, addressed the island as its English mispronunciation, Guam. These juxtapositions of diverse names were reflections of the speaker’s idea for what should be utilized for the given context of FestPac. If the purpose of establishing the Festival of the Pacific Arts was in “...attempt[s] to combat the erosion of traditional customary practices”, are utilizing and practicing the colonizers’ titles and languages to address the indigenous peoples of the Pacific truly in alignment with the festival’s purpose (*Festival of Pacific Arts Guam*)? What does this imply of indigenous arts, if the indigenous title is not utilized? Perhaps a counter argument would be a question of not knowing the indigenous names of places. However, should not the purposes of FestPac, in alignment with this gathering’s founding values, and for continual expansion

⁵³ Taiwan was accepted as a participant of the Festival of Pacific Arts for the first time in 2008.

and enrichment of the individual and multiple collectives, be to not only practice what is known, but to inquire? What bodies of knowledges do the Pacific arts want to preserve and engage with? Festpac on Guåhan was a striking visual and visceral realization of the need for self-autonomy from the US⁵⁴.



Figure 10: Statement during the closing ceremony of FestPac.
Photo courtesy of Kisha Borja-Quichocho-Calvo. 04 June 2016.

Fanhasso was a significant production because its creative process involved engaging with and cultivating Matao worldview and practices. It is an artistic and creative display of self-sufficiency by one's own standards among the lurking US territorial veil that overlaps the island in visual and visceral military occupation. *Fanhasso* is a creative display and action of self-autonomy that draws from an internal, collective, and site-specific relationship of ancestral connection, community, fearlessness, and survival.

Fanhasso was comprised of dancers Dākot-ta Alcantara-Camacho (Matao; Mongmong, Tomhom, Hagã'-ña; Ilocano; Vigan), Alethea Bordallo (Chamorro⁵⁵;

⁵⁴ Currently, Guåhan is a territory of the US.

⁵⁵ I asked each dancer for their name spelling, ethnicity, and place(s) of heritage. I have transcribed them in the way they were presented to me.

Barrigada, Guåhan), Roldy Agüero Ablao (Chamoru; Yoña, Guåhan), Roquin-Jon Quichocho Siongco (Chamoru; Yigo, Guåhan), Jeannae Flores (Chamorro; Papago, Saipan) and me. Jack Gray (Ngati Porou, Ngapuhi, Te Rarawa, Ngati Kahungunu) was the choreographic advisor. The performance included esteemed collaborators: Guåhan chant group I Fanlalai'an; master Taonga Puoro artists Horomona Horo⁵⁶ and James Webster⁵⁷; and Chamorro musician Primitiva Muna.

The following is an excerpt of my personal journal entry from June 4, 2016:

"It was 30 minutes until the show was scheduled to start. There was a line forming down the stairway. We were not yet ready.

"The newspaper said 6:30!"

"I'm sorry. It was wrong. It should have said 7PM."

The news broadcast too stated the start time as 7PM.

"We're not ready yet!"

The line downstairs continued to extend.

"Focus, everyone. Dance TOGETHER."

I keep my anxiousness to myself. Are we really still putting the finishing touches on the show right now?

Do what needs to be done. We are performing on Guåhan. We are performing for FestPac.

The yellow tape is unleashed. The queue comes up the Azotea stairs and onto our audience setup.

People find their places and squeeze in tightly next to one another.

People are unable to find available seating and stand closely to the sides of the stairway.

It is packed.

The sun is setting. Primitiva begins by singing a few songs. Her voice is calming and blissful, setting the tone for the start of the show.

The sound score begins.

Is this the same music we rehearsed with?!

The musical cue in the last score was at 30 seconds.

We are now about 50 seconds in.

We had spent such a long time in our rehearsal getting this beginning timing correct.

About one minute in.

Let's just move on to the next cue. Time goes by so fast.

⁵⁶ www.horomonahoro.com/

⁵⁷ www.tahaa.co.nz/biography-mainmenu-38.html

We create the line of four that is our blob. The movements were inspired from two-dimensional images into a breaking off into partners of two.

Just go for it. Listen to the others.

Be receptive of one another, and listen with the depth of intention we had set for ourselves.” (Pasion 04 June 2016)



Figure 11: The Azotea. Photo by Jack Gray

Each rehearsal was flexibly structured with a clear beginning and conclusion for each day. We routinely opened and closed the rehearsal space with an invocation of chant led by Alcantara-Camacho. Gray pushed us beyond what we knew, and kept us focused on “dancing for the gods”, constantly having in our consciousness that what we were creating and drawing from the relationship between human and land that surpasses the body. Dance was not just movement, but a reflection of this relationship beyond a sole focus on the body. Deirdre Sklar too states: “One has to look beyond movement to get at its meaning... The concepts embedded in movement are not necessarily evident in the movement itself...” (Sklar 4, 9).

There was an impromptu experience in one of our rehearsals:

We were getting ready to conclude for the day. It was *limlim taotao*⁵⁸, and the sun was setting. Gray paired us with one another. One person would hold a cell phone on flashlight mode, while the other would dance. The time of the day was rapidly becoming

⁵⁸ twilight hour

darker, creating shadows in our soundshell rehearsal space. The cellphone holder would create shadows of the dancer, allowing this person to adjust the size and direction of where the shadow projected upon the soundshell walls. It was such an intense and spiritual moment for us all. Ablao, who had been claiming he had never danced before, broke through this restraining thought. His tall figure was continuous in leaps and tumbles across the floor. Siongco-Quichocho played with creating shadows that fluxed between being shorter than him to gigantic. Ablao gave his energy to the dance until he was done. I was in awe and disbelief the entire time as I witnessed this. Our sensibilities were truly heightened and interactive with the liminal time period of *limlim taotao*. Gray rushed and told Ablao to state everything he was feeling at that moment. Ablao, out of breath, spoke in phrases and single words. As he recuperated and regained a steady breath, we re-collected and debriefed the day. I created a much deeper bond with everyone after this experience.



Figure 12: Rehearsal space, the Ypao Soundshell. Photo by Jack Gray.

Gray states: “In Māori dance, movement alone does not equate itself as the sole indicator of authenticity, but it is in the layering of process that draws together the space between the participants that creates collective notions of meaning and enhances the value systems that contribute to the overall sense of wellbeing” (Gray, I Moving Lab Facebook 19 February 2017). Gray being our choreographer, the performance and its

process had many layers to its composition that intertwine and inform one another. This approach to dance interests me because it reminds me of the multi-layered approach of hula. In hula, *kaona*⁵⁹ continues to unfold as time progresses in dancing the same mele, or chanting the same 'oli. For example, the word *aloha* has three common meanings: a greeting, love, a farewell. Through repetition, meaning continues to be realized. Multi-layeredness is embedded in the Hawaiian and Māori cultures. This repetitious method of realizing meaning inspires me from a Filipina standpoint on how to approach learning Philippine culture.

In the performance, I danced a solo choreo-graphy. During the creative process, Siongco-Quichocho had shared with the group a scientific and historical perspective explaining the creation of the Marianas Trench. He went on to describe plate tectonics, and the large diversity of life that is continuously being prodded into and researched. Then, Gray had given the dancers a task to dance this story. We were given just a few minutes to individually choose a place on the stage floor and create our choreo-graphies. Multiple and simultaneous activities were the way our rehearsals were conducted. We would have moments of splitting into groups, and then converging to share what we had been creating. Osmosis occurs here between relationships with one another, spirit that is invoked, and with the given earth we stand upon. We then presented these solos to one another.

One may understand how forms of life relate through intentful, intuitive, and exploratory movement. This embodied method of knowledge transmission provides an alternative option to a transmission method utilizing written text. In creating my solo, I began by lying on the floor. I translated the explosive experience of creation under the water as opposing forces continually colliding and settling. This process of collision and settling is circular in occurrences, as a life cycle. The choreo-graphy involved envisioning the body as halves, splitting vertically down the center. My body stretched horizontally as widely as I naturally could do so, and would then engage the sternum and core, creating a crunching movement. After these steps, there was a rest period.

⁵⁹ "Hidden meaning, as in Hawaiian poetry; concealed reference, as to a person, thing, or place; words with double meanings that might bring good or bad fortune."

This sequence would repeat a few more times. However, each time was different from what was prior. Energy shifts were occurring internally and outwardly. I articulate this experience as intuitive and organic movement, allowing for intuition, openness, the story and the stories of the place we were upon to converge and manifest. Coming from a primarily hula background makes the experience of these movements truly a different sensibility that I have experienced from hula, that is consciously rooted and connected to culture. Alcantara-Camacho has described this performance and its intention as: “...an embodiment of the spirit of transformation through a new physical language and form” (Pacific News).

On May 17th, 2016, when I had just arrived in the Tamuning Airport, it was about sunset time, the time of *limlim taotao*. I picked up my checked in luggage, and almost immediately spotted Alcantara-Camacho and Gray. I wanted to rush towards them and greet them both with warm embraces. I stilled my jumpy excitement, and engaged my core to a standstill. They greeted me with a song. We then joined hands, closed our eyes, and continued on with a chant. We were located between two pillars in the Tamuning airport, a spot with slight seclusion. We opened our eyes, and there was a bystander with his camera phone directed towards us. He stated, “That was awesome!” “Are we your entertainment?” We then walked towards the exit of the facility. We had lugged my one check-in, and one carry-on luggage into the car. We shared laughs, jumping nerves, awe, and appreciation for reuniting in another part of the world to continue our intentions of ancestral connection. We approached the exit kiosk of the airport.

“American dollars?” I asked.

“Thank you for that observation,” Gray stated.

On the way home, Alcantara-Camacho had shared stories with me of the places we were passing by. The next day I would join the ongoing rehearsals of *Fanhasso*.

Each day and each rehearsal were unique. We practiced in multiple spaces throughout the duration of FestPac. Indoor rehearsal spaces were not secured because they were not accessible during this time. In turn, this allowed for us to rehearse with no mirrors upon the Guåhan earth in multiple locations and under varying weather

conditions. The variety of conditions strengthened and conditioned us. This cultivated our embodied understanding of site-specific knowledge. One of our rehearsal workshopping exercises had derived from a story Alcantara-Camacho had shared with me-- the women who saved Guåhan from the giant fish. Bevaqua and Bowman describe this story as one of Guåhan's *histories of wonder*⁶⁰. The story of the women who saved Guåhan from the giant fish speaks of a gender egalitarian Matao societal organization and consciousness. Bevacqua and Bowman state that this story continues to inspire eco-activism and sovereignty among people of Guåhan; notably against U.S. military strikes upon Pāgat, Litekyan, Pāgan, and Tinian (Bevacqua and Bowman). While the term *history of wonder* continues to connote mysticism and othering, and to employ colonial power dynamics as is prevalent in the Western⁶¹ paradigm, this title is useful in observing attempts to meet a level of understanding between differing indigenous and Western paradigms.



Figure 13: Alethea Bordallo and Russchel Seballos Blas performing with bandage nets. *Fanhasso* at GAX. Photo by Jack Gray. 18 June 2016.

We explored this story through the practicality of a net during our rehearsals and creative process. In the performance, the women— Bordallo, Flores, and I— were aware of this story. We also included our explorations of wrap-around bandages.

⁶⁰ “The Chamorro concept of wonder may best be described as histories of wonder, stories of greatness in the past that construct an Indigenous narrative of eco-identity tied intimately to the island of Guåhan” (Bevaqua and Bowman 72).

⁶¹ I utilize the term *Western* as connoted through Edward Said’s *Orientalism*

Bordallo provided the idea of stretching the material by thinning and expanding upon its weavings. In doing so, we could see the inner weavings of its composition that this bandage entailed, similar to the mechanics of a net.



Figure 14: Alethea Bordallo and the author during rehearsal. Dancing with a net. Photo by Jack Gray.
30 May 2016.

To continue creative inspirations from the genealogy of creation, we conducted a rehearsal at Lasso' Fuha. There are different versions of this creation story⁶². According to the Matao chant, *I Tinituhon*, Lasso' Fuha is where brother and sister Pontan and Fo'na lived. They had no parents. When Pontan was preparing to die, he told her through chant what to do with his body. Pieces of his entire body were created into various elements of the Earth. Fo'na then gathers red dirt, sand, and sweet water, and forms herself into a rock. From this, she creates the first man and woman.

⁶² Thompson, Laura Maud. *The Native Culture of the Marianas Islands*. New York: Kraus Repr, 1971. 19+. Print.



Figure 15: Roquin-Jon Siongco-Quichocho, Roldy Aguerro Ablao, Alethea Bordallo, and the author improvising in Lasso' Fuha. Photo by Jack Gray. 24 May 2016.



Figure 16: Roldy Aguerro Ablao at Lasso' Fuha. Photo by Jack Gray. 24 May 2016.

While I was watching one of Guåhan's dance performances on the main stadium stage, I viscerally experienced the influences of Spanish colonization upon Guåhan's dance and music vocabularies, and attire aesthetics. From an intersectional standpoint between race, nationhood, and culture, this was a jarring affect in re-cognizing the stark similarities of folk dances and attire between the Philippines and Guåhan from an audience perspective, triggered through embodied memory. While some would utilize these similarities as a reason for solidarity through colonized experience, I consider strategizing for what would be a next step of healing and mending after this re-cognition. I realized the immense and continual extent of Spanish influence upon the islands of Guåhan and the Philippines, and the visual and manneristic symbols of social class intertwined with Spanish embodiment. What does this say about the imbalance of accessibility and re-presentation between indigenous Matao and Philippine dances with American pop and Spanish cultures upon their own islands? Because the tie to social class and Spanish influences continues to flourish among these cultures, I encourage emphasizing performance as a safe space to practice liberation, and to work through fragmentation that is continually taught through a compartmentalizing paradigm of learning. I also encourage practicing and articulating dance for purposes of survival, sustenance, and adaptation that are beyond entertainment and preservation. This example is one of many impetuses behind questioning if a separate and distinguished segment focusing on the Spanish colonial era should be included in the representation of Guåhan for the Festival of Pacific Arts. Given the reality of indigenous suppression through physical and psychological violence, does this segment truly invoke collective empowerment, colonial violences, or transformation? Is it in alignment with the origins of the Festival of Pacific Arts? And what would this representation trigger for other participating islands whose histories include colonial imposition of societal and cultural power dynamics.



Figure 17: Closing ceremony during the 12th Festival of Pacific Arts in Guam.

Photo by Manny Crisostomo. June 4, 2016.

Contentions of cultural re-presentation were apparent throughout the diverse events of the entire festival. These contentions enlivened what many Matao peoples had described as a *cultural renaissance*. In a personal conversation, Alcantara-Camacho's cousin, Franceska De Oro, stated that having the other Pacific islands on Guåhan allowed her and others to see the extent of colonization upon Guåhan in comparison to the other islands of the region. It had inspired her and many people of Guåhan to re-member and uplift their indigenous cultural practices.

"We are so relieved that now the Guåhan public has been exposed, challenged, provoked, stimulated, inspired, turned off - and all of these multiple reactions to contemporary dance made possible because we created this work" (Gray on MNPP handle. 03 June 2016).

At the conclusion of our dance during the performance at the Azotea, I Fanlalai'an, placed us in the center of the performing area to form a seated circle. They then formed a standing concentric circle around us and proceeded to sing and chant / *Tinituhon*. The experience was so deeply resonating in the rhythmic clapping, stomps, and harmonies that were felt more potently because we were seated on the floor. Those among us and the audience who knew this chant also harmoniously joined in. The

performance space had become collectively engaged. This conclusion to the performance conjoined our processes of knowledge transmission through both dance and chant, ideas of contemporary and traditional, unified through the genealogy of creation. The following is an excerpt of this chant and translation provided by Alcantara-Camacho:

“Gi tinituhon, i tinituhon,	In the beginning, the beginning
Ge’halom hinasson i Yahululo’,	Deep within the thoughts of the
Manetnon i hinafa siha,	most high
Taihenekkok yan taichi,	All things coming together
Ge’halom hinasson i Yahululo’,	Infinite and limitless
Ge’halom hinasson, Ge’halom	Deep within the thoughts of the
hinasson i Yahululo’,	most high
Hui!	Deep within, Deep within, the
Taihenekkok yan taichi,	thoughts of the most high
Hå!” (Iriarte, Manibusan, Santos)	Infinite and Limitless ⁶³



Figure 18: I Fanlalai’an surrounding the dancers and musicians in a circle and chanting *I Tinituhon* to conclude the performance. 03 June 2016.

⁶³ Excerpt of the chant *I Tinituhon*, written by L.Z. Iriarte, V.R. Manibusan, and M.A. Santos, translated by Dâkot-ta Alcantara-Camacho.

Through this performance as research experience upon Guåhan, I understand *contemporary* in this context to be of multi-layered understandings of the given moment and place. *Indigenous contemporary* is inclusive of multiple influences that have gathered upon the space to be in a sustainable harmony with the natural surroundings, thereby meshing divisions from compartmentalized labels of identity. This sustainable harmony acknowledged in the choreo-graphic process and culminating performance display how culture and tradition shift in circumstances, but manifest to be relevant to the current day, thereby surpassing ideals of preservation through continued practice. Inclusive subjectivity and connecting the body in relation to space, culture, and community are more realized in practicing articulation and retrospection. Hence, this is the significance of articulating performance for healing, collaborative existence, and sustenance. Movement exploration and site-specific awareness engages the dancers to critically think with mind and body to understand themselves in relation to the place. Cultivating constant inquiry and imagination of histories of wonder eventually permeates a stagnated understanding of history, because the nature of wonder and story is multi-layered and therefore continuously manifests interpretations as one considers life in relation to the story.

In *Fanhasso*, inter-cultural performance conducted community building by focusing on collective creation among the dancers, and how they articulated meaning in relation to the place. Each dancer and musician contributed their talents, organization, and logistics in figuring out how to weave these narratives and experiences into a seamless performance. My perspective as a Filipina learning Matao culture through my involvement in this production allowed me to see the large population of Filipinx upon Guåhan, and observe similarities and differences between these cultures. I saw here how US military presence and the Manila Acapulco Galleon trade historically conjoined routes across the ocean to one another, thereby syncretizing aspects of culture and worldview between both distinct landmasses. Philippine presence was silenced in the FestPac festival, despite the imported décor and purchased lei for each participating delegate that were imported from the Philippines. My hope is that through this auto-ethnographic documentation of my role and experience, more people would consider

Philippine and Pacific connections without such emphasis on geo-political and economic limitations that are initially enforced for globalizing reasons. Hopefully the Philippines may be considered as a genealogy of Pacific migration, thereby expanding upon current identity constructs, and cultural practices from a contemporary indigenous point of view.

In this chapter, I analyzed and specified how visual symbols of US occupation on Guåhan affects visceral experiences of Matao identity and land. These experiences are notated through choreo-graphy and interwoven in the culminating performance of *Fanhasso*. Performance and its creative process engaged with the Matao language *fino'* *håya* movement, and community to create a contemporary Matao artistic production and vision for creative futurity. Gray's involvement as our choreographer and co-organizer imbedded a Māori dance worldview into the creative process.

MOLOKA'I : I MOVING LAB FINAL PERFORMANCE

“Reciprocity. Exchange. Planting seeds. Connecting and giving what we had. This is what I Moving Lab was about. Moloka'i understood and fully responded”
(Pasion on IML handle. 23 November 2016).

The I Moving Lab (IML) tour in Hawai'i was from November 7 to November 20, 2016. This artist ensemble traveled through O'ahu, Big Island Hawai'i, Maui, and Moloka'i. Members were: Jack Gray, Dâkot-ta Alcantara-Camacho, Samantha “Sammay” Dizon (Bicol, Kapampangan, Ilokano, Philippines), Marya Wethers (Turtle Island), Kristi Keanuenuēpi'olaniku'uleialoha “Kea” Kapahua (Kalapana, Kona, Hawai'i; China; Indiana, US; Denmark, Sweden, England), and me⁶⁴. Gray, Alcantara-Camacho, and Dizon participated in the entire tour. Marya participated in O'ahu and Big Island. Kea was the wildcard dancer, who attended an IML workshop at UH Hilo and then participated in the Big Island and Maui performances. Toni participated on O'ahu, Maui, and Moloka'i. IML also provided creative ways of presenting and conducting research. IML is described as:

“... an intercultural and indigenous based contemporary movement and performance ensemble. Formed in New York City at the Indigenous Dance Forum curated by Māori contemporary dance artist Jack Gray (Research Scholar at Asian/Pacific/American Institute at New York University), I Moving Lab is a travelling consortium that brings cultural practitioners, community advocates and artists of different nations to Hawai'i to present a series of public workshops, artist talks, community activations, nature site visits and performance.”

(Infinite Dâkot-ta)

For this thesis, I will focus on IML's concluding day of the workshop-performance that took place on Moloka'i in Kalaniana'ole Hall. I map how IML on Moloka'i generated community gathering, creating an immersive form of performance that highlighted community involvement and reciprocity. I also note how conceptions of traditional and

⁶⁴ I asked each dancer for their name spelling, ethnicity, and place(s) of heritage. I have transcribed them in the way they were presented to me.

contemporary, and audience and performer blended through this joint workshop-performance. I then note from a Filipina context connecting with community through IML as an indigenous contemporary platform.

Upon each island, Gray, Alcantara-Camacho, Dizon, and I were each assigned to be the daily transcriber. This entailed recapitulating each day and taking photos as documentation. The dancers' transcriptions added an element of rigorous urgency in articulating somatic experiences of dance, ceremony, and our daily happenings. This practice of articulation allowed me to perceive how all occurrences of the day were in alignment with the purpose of indigenous and communal connection. This is also a significant reason for performers and artists to recapitulate their experiences— because reflection continually aligns the purpose with the actions. The last two days of the tour upon Moloka'i were my assigned transcribing days.

“By 4PM, it was exciting to see the range of people who showed up— from different ages, shapes and sizes. People said that they had never seen the community come out in these numbers, and with this readiness to engage in a workshop that many people were unsure of what to expect.”

(Pasion on IML handle)

IML created the performance space to be a communal gathering, thereby inviting audiences to engage with the event as participatory and ceremonial. Participation from both the audience and performers blurred the fourth wall division. This merged space included welcoming technical difficulties that may have occurred, because the purpose of the performances were not for sole entertainment, but for all present to critically, physically, and vocally engage with performance as ceremony.

The platform of performance also enhanced sensibilities and awarenesses, requiring each performer to push ourselves to work at our optimal potential in each given moment. This involved learning challenging dances in the morning, and performing them later that same day. This situation challenged the performers to give our absolute best in memorization and transmission, and solidified the learning through the heightened sensibilities of performance. I learned from this experience how to

handle demanding performance and ancestral work in an energetically sustainable way, and how to ground each moment with the intention of achieving the overarching goal.

“We all formed a circle and held hands to start. Jack, Dâkot-ta, Sammay, and Toni introduced themselves to everyone. Jack then led us all through some easy and counted-off movements for the circle to do as we held one another’s hands. It was now time for a Muscle & Bone session. Thinking that this would be where a good amount of people would sit on the sides to watch, the community actually stuck together and gave it their all. More and more the community spirit shown. Everyone, from keiki to elders, danced and gave their all full. Our hearts were so full. From some warm-up jams, to Missy Elliot’s “Get Your Freak On”, to “Revolutionize this Earth”, it was Spirit that led the way and filled the room. Everyone broke a sweat and would now prepare to watch the performance.”
(Pasion on IML handle)

After the beginning welcoming circle, where the performers introduced themselves, the event shifted into a movement workshop entitled Muscle & Bone. Gray explained the instructions of this exercise: follow his movements; while moving forward, stay in alignment with the person in your line; hurry back to the back of the line to start again with a new movement. The workshop is described as the following:

“Indigenous physicality draws upon an innate groundedness, with locomotive movements that apply repetition, directionality and spatial assertion – this training methodology combines a robust rhythm to upbeat music to work up a collective vibration of energy and fun.” (UHM Dept. of Theatre + Dance)

A community collective between performers and the audience was generated through movement and high-energy music for the duration of this one hour of this workshop. This also gave the community a perception of what we do as indigenous contemporary dance researchers and performers. I believe this also impacted the reception of the performance that was to follow, because the exertion of physical energy in the workshop allowed for us all to enliven our cognitive, somatic communication, thereby providing a grounding feeling of presentation done through physicality rather than solely words.



Figure 19: Muscle & Bone workshop. Photo by the author. 20 November 2016.

Approaching dance and culture from an indigenous perspective critiques exoticized and othering narratives of the colonial gaze. A decolonial perspective strategizes and acts upon disengaging hegemonic power dynamics. The physically challenging experiences of dancing in the ocean during the creative process of *Fanhasso* and the performance of IML countered romanticized, exoticized, and cliché narratives of the Pacific Island regions as constructed paradises. The Mitimiti water dance displayed the physical realities of the complex ocean. The uneven floor consisted of rocks and other varying mushy textures, thereby altering the smoothness of our movement phrases. Different types of seaweed also surrounded us. Dancing in unison was another challenge because of the ocean's unpredictability. This dance was performed by Dizon and me.

“Jack then came to meet us and see how we were doing...He also told us the story of the water dance: It is a dance of washing off blood from our bodies. The story was not one of smoothness and grace, but of abruptness and fire. It now aligned with the reality of the waters we were dancing upon. Jack encouraged us to make waves, to be earnest in the variety of the ocean floor, and our care in stepping and rolling on all sorts of rocks and seaweed. This direction then enlivened the story that was meant to be transcribed with the Moloka'i waters.” (Pasion on IML handle)

After the Muscle & Bone workshop, we had a 15 minute break to refresh and prepare.

“Once ready, the community was led out to the back of Kalaniana‘ole Hall to stand by the ocean shoreline. Sammay and Toni awaited by the shore. After the audience had settled in a bit, Toni proceeded to walk into the ocean. Kumu Kanoelani Davis and her hālau did an ‘oli and sent it out into the ocean.

During the ‘oli, a flock of birds flew across the ocean, and a school of fish were jumping and making themselves known. They too were dancing with us. Later, Marcus Quinones [one of our hosts] had told us that the flock of birds were endemic to Moloka‘i— another message that we were all in the right place at the given moment— creating, receiving, and giving what needed to be.”



Figure 20: The author preparing for the Mitimiti Water Dance, starting as a flock of birds flew across the ocean. Photo by Trankie Hagos. 20 November 2016.

“From the vibrant and pulsating energy of the movement workshop, to the calm and receptive energy of the performance, there was this community ethos that knew who they were, and recognized this performance as a communal ritual. After the water dance, Dākot-ta blew the pu shell and chanted *I Manmatao*. It was then time for everyone to make our way indoors. The audience made their way to the hall with the awareness of ceremony.”



Figure 21: Alcantara-Camacho chanting *I Manmatao* as the audience walks up the ramp to enter the hall.
Photo by Trankie Hagos. 20 November 2016.

The performance line-up is as follows:

“Jack opened the space with a solo that then lead into the Goddess dance— a dance created in the Indigenous Dance Forum in April in Lenapehoking.



Figure 22: Dizon, Alcantara-Camacho, the author, and Jack performing the Goddess dance.
Photo by Trankie Hagos. 20 November 2016.

A video of *Fanhasso* followed. This was an excerpt from its performance on Guåhan from this past summer. A *Fanhasso* duet performed by Dākot-ta and Toni followed the video clip.

After this was an excerpt of Māori choreographer Bianca Hyslop's piece "The Beauty of Small", performed by Jack and Sammay. Bianca was also a dancer in the Indigenous Dance Forum.

Toni then performed an excerpt of her choreo-graphy entitled "Mana Wahine", speaking and dancing her embodied memories of receiving Philippine traditional tattooing, batok.

Following this was Sammay's piece entitled 'Reclaim Bae'. This piece tells the story of an elder Lumad woman who was imprisoned by the military, and speaks out against rape and corporate greed in the Philippines, particularly of the Lumad struggle of Mindanao.



Figure 23: Dizon performing "Reclaim Bae." Photo by Trankie Hagos. 20 November 2016.

Following this was Jack and Dākot-ta's piece entitled 'Ruatepupuke'. The piece included a voice recording of an early television show telling the story of Ruatepupuke and when the marae's people went to visit this ancestor in the Chicago Field Museum" (Pasion, IML handle).

All of these presentations performed indigenous futurities and investigative expressions of cultural identities from Māori, Matao, and Philippine perspectives. These dance forms were inclusive of hip-hop, contemporary dance, hula influences, and new exploratory movements as methodologies. Dizon and I had a reflective conversation while on the IML tour, asking one another why we became involved with contemporary dance as an outlet later on in our dance trainings. We agreed upon having an urge for expression through different sensibilities. These presentations also display points in our lives where we feel a necessity to bend and transcend social constructs. These constructs include the social division between indigenous and non-indigenous, contemporary and traditional, etc. Gray states, “I am drawn to Bradshaw’s idea that whakapapa (genealogy) is a continuum: that the words ‘contemporary’ and ‘traditional’ are inappropriate and are Pākehā cultural constructs” (Gray 2015). Performance is also a method of constructing spaces for full expression, as well as freedom and liberation in diverse contexts. Therefore, investigating indigenous issues and questions of identity through an embodied practice and performance transcends socially constructed divisions, takes into acceptance and account the daily influences of the present day, and assembles performance as a space of freedom by engaging with hyper-awarenesses that acknowledge ancestral connection in the present moment.

“Reclaim Bae” was a 15 minute long multi-media piece that connected with Hawai’i audiences through an intersectional standpoint of US military occupation, rape and forced prostitution, and human rights for women and children. The audience response to this piece was attentive. Some themes of this piece include indigeneity, feminism, military occupation, and decolonization. There was also the analogy of land and woman—the rape of a woman and the occupation of an island. Parallels of Hawaiian experiences align with these themes, as well as the US relationship and imposition upon island nations. The piece showed these parallels, as well as how Filipinx could critically approach awareness of Philippine migration to Hawai’i and the US continent through dancing their own narratives. Dizon also utilized the hip-hop dance form to communicate this story. This brings into consideration the perspective of Filipinas born and based outside of the Philippines and within the US context of societal

inequity and liberation, and how one maneuvers full expression of self. This also displays social and ethnic mapping through the choice of the hip-hop genre as expression, drawing parallels to the experiences of people of color in the US context. What parallels can be drawn from the utilization of hip-hop as performative liberation between the Philippine and the African American experience? Among the many statements and possibilities this piece invokes, this also exemplifies possibilities of solidarity and coalition-building through similar experiences and processes in combating US colonization, white patriarchy, and indigenous genocide.

The community had been receptive and involved throughout the day. This includes participation in preparing the performance space, being attentive and generous in the quality of their engagement with us during the Muscle & Bone workshop, and listening to our messages of culture and indigenous connection through dance. At the end of our performance,

“...the community responded with gifting of lei and an ‘oli mahalo, led by Kumu Kanoelani, followed by a hula to *Wahine ‘Ilikea* danced by her, her hālau, and members of the community, followed by another Moloka‘i ‘auana by three kāne (who earlier in the movement workshop were totally bringing it!). Tears were shared by us four.”

The community then approached us one by one, and we exchanged breath through *hongī*⁶⁵. “People came and talked to us afterwards, also sharing their stories, experiences, and pictures.”

⁶⁵ A greeting involving two people touching their foreheads and noses as both inhale and exhale.



Figure 24: Alcantara-Camacho, Gray, the author, and Dizon *hongī* with Moloka'i community after the performance. Photo by Trankie Hagos. 20 November 2016.

Our hosts, Ehulani Kāne and Marcus Quinones, incorporated a potluck to be held post-performance, adding another element of community involvement and hospitality. Potlucks as gatherings are spaces of communal connection through food. This was an ideal conclusion to this event because the context of sharing food among one another strengthens and cultivates bonds through nourishment. During this time, performers and Moloka'i community conversed with one another on similar experiences in spreading awarenesses of indigenous issues, as well as through our cultural experiences as Filipinx on Hawai'i and on the US continent.

“Aunty Ehu and Marcus had filled four plates for us, and set them on the end table. They made sure to have us enjoy our food thoroughly and give us the space to recollect after performing. This was another example of how generously and specifically we were cared for by our Moloka'i hosts.”



Figure 25: Potluck post-performance on the back deck of Kalaniana'ole Hall. Photo by Jack Gray. 20 November 2016.

Community understandings of responsibilities were apparent in how they took care of the space during IML. As we were rehearsing prior to the performance, Auntie Ehulani's friends started arriving early to help clean and set up the space. There were also two little girls who took care of the entrance table. Their responsibility was to greet people coming in, gather e-mail addresses, and collect any donations. This initial greeting already set the community ethos of inter-generational cooperation upon audience arrival. Afterwards, while the performers were eating and communing, those who were finished with their food were already cleaning inside the hall. Those cleaning were both elder and younger generations. This highlights how intergenerational cooperation occurs through imbedded understandings of responsibility in setting up gathering space, and how continuity occurs in caring for the space from prior to the event to after its culmination—not solely during the performance. These elements of continuity and responsibility create a space where the purpose of performance is communication, and not solely entertainment. Participatory performance leveled the dynamics between the audience and performer, creating an understanding of reciprocity. This was apparent also in the community singing, dancing, gifting us lei, and exchanging breath through *hongī*.

“Moloka’i, you were the perfect conclusion of this tour. We created memories and planted seeds through our stories and dance. Mahalo a nui for an experience we will all never forget. You’ve shown us the power of community, upholding of reciprocity, and the aloha of your people and your ‘aina. Until we meet again. Aloha ‘oe.” (Pasion IML handle)

This chapter has documented the final workshop-performance of IML. In doing so, I articulate examples of how the performers and audience created Kalaniana‘ole Hall as a space of comm-unity by engaging with a communal worldview through participation and performance, rather than socially constructed compartmentalizations among people and space. This also displayed how reciprocity was naturally enacted, as well as notating this event as an example of indigenous contemporary performance and its process. This chapter also notates how Filipinx utilized dance and performance to express narratives and indigenous issues, and how connection between the Philippine experience and those on Hawai‘i have found parallels.

Indigenous contemporary dance as presented in the Indigenous Dance Forum, *Fanhasso*, and IML portray navigations of inter-generational and inter-national mobilities through indigenous worldviews and distinctive situations. These performances show what relationality looks like between people, places, natural environment, and cultures, and how they continually cultivate meaning-making. My involvement in these processes nurtures my insight on how innovation of cultural practices sustains and retains culture. In these situations, the practices are dance, performance, and music. Interacting with diverse influences in a given moment and location can be approached as opportunities on how to interact and collaborate while also being grounded in one’s genealogy, rather than allowing cultural submersion and sole mimicry to come into play.

In writing this thesis, I could not write about the experience of IDF without writing about IML. I could not reflect with the attentiveness that I had during the creative and performance process of *Fanhasso* without the mental, physical, and spiritual preparation of the IDF. I could not write about the production of *Manariwa* without IML being a departure point. These articulations map how I navigate through diverse situations of collaborative performance while upholding and inquiring of my Filipina

genealogy. The following chapter documents how I continued to research my genealogy through dance in the Philippines, in turn envisioning possibilities for how dance can continue to expand in the Philippines.

CHAPTER 8

SURVEY OF DANCE IN PHILIPPINES

From June 5 to August 3, 2016, I traveled to Antipolo, Manila, Nabua, Laoag, and Baguio, Philippines. This followed my participation in the Matao New Performance Project's indigenous contemporary dance production *Fanhasso* on Guåhan. The MNPP engaged with dance and performance as embodied methodologies towards knowing the stories of Guåhan and Matao culture. Alcantara-Camacho describes the MNPP as an opportunity to embody ancestral values "...in a way that moves from the earth, from the wind, from the water, through us. [This] informs our understanding of what culture is through our relationship to the environment itself" (Alcantara-Camacho). This embodied methodology guided my approach towards learning my genealogy through dance in the Philippines. My intention for being in the Philippines was to research my genealogy and identity as a Filipina through dance. I observed in what settings and situations dance would occur, and what prominent themes were in creative productions. I was interested in learning site-specific stories and pedagogic styles or protocols for transmitting choreo-graphy. I had read various texts on dance and Philippine culture, and learned Philippine dance from various teachers prior to this trip, but this was the first time I would site-specifically learn and Philippine dance in the places of its origins. I participated in familial, communal, and professional sectors of dance. I attended the Dance.MNL Conference in Pasay City, Manila, two *pangalay*⁶⁶ dance practices with the Alunalun Dance Circle under the direction of Ligaya Fernando-Amilbangsa, and one private lesson of Tingguian dances at the Nueva Era Eco Cultural Center, taught by Dyna Grace Aguinaldo Paulino and Denise Marcelo. I interviewed Artistic Director of Ballet Philippines, Paul Morales, and an alumni and an undergraduate student of Dance at the University of the Philippines, Diliman: Japhet Mari "JM" Cabling and Honey Lynn Juntilla, who were accompanied by Associate Professor Angela Baguilat. I also conducted archival research of Cordilleran cultures at the University of the Philippines-Baguio campus of Ballet Philippines at the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

⁶⁶ Dance form of the Tausug peoples of the Sulu archipelago

My theoretical preparations prior to undergoing this fieldwork was analyzing Philippine dance for its categorical labels. *What is understood by the titles Filipino and Filipina? What is understood by the act of dance?* I grappled with this Filipino/Philippine/Filipina identity question for many years, and therefore had to spend time in the Philippines to develop an understanding of how Filipina identity resonated with me. Questions of identity and values are not easily distinguished in Philippine collective spaces in the diaspora and are constantly contested. Therefore I was drawn to cultures that have worked through answering cultural identity questions for guidance. My hula practice had taught me a clear understanding of the body in relation to natural surroundings. This relationship is continually renewed through the practice of hula and 'oli. In the hula context, identity is tied to location. Māori musician and scholar, Charles Royal states of building performance space: "When we try and think about building a space for performance, the only idea we had in our minds was let the land decide what the space should be. Keeping with the indigenous notion of letting the land speak through into human creativity" (Royal 2012). I refer to this statement to deflect from anthropocentric viewpoints of identity and creation. Indigenous understandings pertain to the relationship between human and natural surroundings, and engage with cognitive ways of knowing. Performance Studies and Indigenous Performance Studies artists state that identity is in constant flux, and consistently considers relationality between people, culture, time, and natural surroundings. I apply Royal's statement of building performance space to transcend performance in theatrical settings and into the social land and cityscapes, therefore considering how mobility also influences re-creation. Identity is continually shifting, as it is renewed in each instance hula and 'oli are enacted. Being in the Philippines was integral to the eventual *Manariwa* creative process so as to "...[let] the land speak through into human creativity" (Royal).

I refer to Philippine identity by one's family name and geographical references. Among these references are regional and provincial locations, and national identity. Regions differ in their level of claiming Philippine national identity, such as those of the Cordillera region. The Cordillera Administrative Region is the only landlocked region of the Philippines. Mindanao too has a significant relationship to the title of *Philippines*.

Mindanao was not defeated by the Spanish, and has a different relationship with Philippine nationalism than the other regions of the Philippines. In Luzon, Cavite province is recognized for their sites dedicated to Philippine nationalism. In a personal conversation, Filipino food and history researcher Ige Ramos stated to me, “I am Filipino first, and Caviteño second” (Ramos, Ige). Ramos has created a tour that explores food in relation to Philippine national history⁶⁷.

Many Philippine families in California and Hawai‘i have emigrated from the Philippines several generations ago and are unfamiliar with their Philippine genealogical origins. I hope that this thesis provides inspiration and suggestions for Filipinx located outside of the Philippines on how to continue on with answering their inquiries. I encourage these inquiries and follow up to journeying in the Philippines. While in Baguio, there were locals who were familiar by name with previous Filipinx who returned to the Philippines for a clearer conception of ancestral identity. I suggest interacting within and outside academic communities. I have found connections through inquiring my last name, and specifying my regional and provincial places of heritages.

My proposals towards broadening perspectives of artistic futurity are inspired by the present Oceanic indigenous contemporary dance movement, and my experiences with indigenous contemporary dance projects documented in previous segments in this thesis. I imagine how dance and creative processes can be broadened to shift understandings of its accessibility as an embodied given. I also envision how choreographies and approaches to dance would look if cultural influences of the Pacific region were considered. Given the high population of Filipinx on various Pacific islands, as well as historical and economic ties to these islands, this may be a potential vision for future dance projects. I imagine possibilities for an expanded dance field-- dance as an embodied methodology, medium of healing, practice of indigenous worldview (focusing on the relationship between human and natural surroundings) to be experienced in diverse regions of the Philippines, and not centralized in metropolises. Broadening and

⁶⁷ I attended this tour entitled Lasa Ng Republika in its trial stages. My travel friend, Maribel Garcia, was concurrently conducting research on food in the Philippines during this time and had invited me to join this tour. The tour is a partnership with Cavitex and Ramos. As of April 2017, there are no websites other than blog posts from the hosts of this tour that I can directly reference.

implementing different dance purposes would re-present the dance field to be beyond entertainment, leisure, and recreation, and rather as a cognitive mode of optimal critical thinking and freeing expression.

My home base in the Philippines is in Antipolo, Rizal with my mother's side of the family. My first experiences with the intention of dancing were in family gatherings, both casual and ceremonial. The casual dances occurred within my first few days of arrival. These occurrences served as ways to transcend the sense of a lengthy three-year long period since the last time I was there, and the language differences between English and Tagalog.

On one night towards the beginning of our arrival, we played a mimicking game in which one person would do a dance move and everyone else would copy it. The night concluded with hearty laughs and anticipation for the next time we would all dance together again. In this moment, I thought of folk dances: historically under what circumstances they were created, and could that moment be a manifestation of a contemporary folk dance sensibility, generated within folk circles and telling the celebratory story of families coming together?



Figure 26: Pictured left to right: Alecs Mendoza, Gabrielle Remy, Cecilia Mendoza, the author, Sendy Mendoza, Axcel Lopez playing an impromptu mimic game. Photo from Abe Lagrimas, Jr. 15 June 2016.

A similar sense of bond through improvisation, play, and dance is documented in Father Albert E. Alejo's report of the Obo Manobo tribe of Mount Apo, Mindanao, who collectivized their tribe in response to the infiltration of a geothermal development upon Mount Apo. They did this by organizing a family reunion to cultivate kinship ties. He documents their methods of re-generating their culture through these family gatherings, and how music and dance naturally developed in these events. Alejo states, "They said they wanted to renew their culture because the culture in their sacred mountain has been bulldozed by development, but they wanted to do that through kinship ties. If we could revive our culture through family reunion there would be other families and clans that will follow"⁶⁸ (Alejo 2003 3). Collectivizing and upholding values of the family structure serve as a root of resilience.

While I was staying in Antipolo, I attended two practice sessions to study the *pangalay* dance form in Marikina with Ligaya Fernando-Amilbangsa and the Alunalun Dance Circle⁶⁹. Marikina is adjacent to the side of Antipolo where I was staying, and luckily was a mere 15 minutes of travel time by car. Fernando-Amilbangsa has dedicated her life to the codification and international dissemination of *pangalay*, a dance form originating from the Sulu archipelago that predates the prevalence of Islam among the island. Respectively, she is the 2015 recipient of the Ramon Magsaysay Award for her life's work. This award is described as: "Asia's premier prize and highest honor, celebrat[ing] greatness of spirit and transformative leadership in Asia. In the past five decades, the award has been bestowed on over three hundred outstanding men, women and organizations whose selfless service has offered their societies, Asia, and the world successful solutions to some of the most intractable problems of human development (Ramon Magsaysay award)." Among many books, she is the author of *Pangalay: Traditional Dances and Related Folk Artistic Expressions*, which won the 1983 National Book Award for best art book by the Manila Critic Circle. She is internationally respected as a preserver and innovator of arts of the Sulu region.

⁶⁸ Forum at the University of Santo Tomas, Aug. 5, 2003 and published later in 2004

⁶⁹ www.pangalay.com

I arrived to classes earlier than scheduled and conversed with Fernando-Amilbangsa on dance and culture. Her work draws from connections between the people of the Southern Philippines, social work, culture, and dance. In our talks, Fernando-Amilbangsa suggested that I conduct a cross-movement analysis between hula and *pangalay*, as similarities in body stance and body part specifications became apparent throughout our conversations. As she spoke of the *pangalay* dance form being “birthed from the ocean”, I knew that this would be a deeply insightful experience in learning how the Pacific Ocean’s waters influenced cultural dance forms located on its opposite shores. This cross-analysis work through art would draw connections between cultures based on our relationships to the Pacific ocean. During my last class, I danced and chanted for them *He Mele no Kalākaua*. At the time, I had recently taught this hula to a group of high school students at Blanco Family Academy in Angono, Rizal.

O Kalākaua a he inoa
O ka pua mae ‘ole i ka lā

Kalākaua is his name
A flower that wilts not in the sun

Ke pua maila ika mauna
Ke kuahiwi o Maunakea

Blooming on the summit
Of the mountain, Mauna Kea

Ke‘a maila i Kilauea
Malamalama o wahine kapu

Burning there at Kilauea
The light of the sacred woman

A luna o Uwe Kahuna
Ka pali kapu o Ka‘au
Ea mai ke ali‘i kia manu
Ua wehi i ka hulu o ka mamo

Above Uwe Kahuna
The sacred cliff of Ka‘au
The bird catching chief rises
Adorned with feathers of the mamo bird

O Kalākaua he inoa
Ka pua mae ‘ole i ka la

Kalākaua is the name
A flower that does not wilt in the sun⁷⁰

The kaona of this mele includes King David Kalākaua, who is renown for reviving hula after it was banned following Queen Ka‘ahumanu’s conversion to Christianity. Kalākaua was also the first king to travel worldwide to promote the Kingdom of Hawai‘i. This mele also brings in sacred names and places of Moku O Keawe, Hawai‘i island.

⁷⁰ Translation from <https://www.kalena.com/huapala/Kalakaua.html>

Respectively, there are parallel themes in this story of Hawai'i with the situation of the Philippines. These themes are travel, economy, transforming indigenous relationships, natural environment, and effects of religion.

Despite the mele's "Disney-fied" popularization through the movie *Lilo and Stitch*, the mele poetically addresses and locates significant places upon Hawai'i Island, and how the natural elements inform the hula movements and 'olelo. I considered the popularization of this song, and if this mele would be suitable to reciprocate their generosity in teaching me this dance form. I determined that presenting this mele would deconstruct the commodified perception of culture as entertainment, as commercialization and exotification are quite prevalent in the Philippine mainstream sector. By presenting this in its hula in a richer understanding that surpasses the predictable Disney narrative, this re-presented the commodified perception of hula in its holistic and ceremonial purposes. My decision to deepen the understanding of a popularized mele allowe us in the space to critically see how cultural songs and dances can be reclaimed. In that moment, I informed them of the name song in honor of King David Kalākaua, reviver of hula, and the sacred names and deities of Hawai'i Island.

From June 26th to July 3rd, I was in Nabua, Camarines Sur in the region of Bicol. I stayed with the Lagrimas family. Abe Lagrimas Jr. was traveling with me in the Philippines from June 5th to July 11th, 2016. The Lagrimas family is well known in this region for having four generations of musicians, and a large and established family band. I did not find or hear about a place where cultural dance or contemporary dance classes were offered in Nabua. The closest I heard of was located an hour and a half drive away in Naga City. However, the dance I experienced here was in family parties. Therefore my focus on dance in Nabua was on social dance and envisioning the context of folk dance origins and creations. There were two large gatherings: one on our arrival that coincided with the death anniversary of a male member of the family, and the other gathering on the night before we would depart. The latter was a spectacular party held in the front of one of the uncle's homes, Eugene Lagrimas. There were music stands lined up for the horn and flute players, a drum set, and a keyboard. There was also an

extremely loud sound system playing dance music, and strobe lights to support the celebratory atmosphere. The neighborhood came and watched.



Figure 27: From left to right: Ian Lagrimas, Joseph Bisenio, unsure, Jhuvil Verango, Robin Orbita, unsure, Johnces Bisenio, unsure, Harley Camposano, Mario Labrador. Departing party in front of Uncle Eugene and family's home. Photo by the author. 02 July 2016.

This departing party was an amazing experience to see how exuberant and proud the family was of their own member of the family coming from Hawai'i. Abe then performed solo performances on the drums and the ukulele. My experience with dance here was primarily with the women of the family on the dance floor, as the musicians were all males.

The women joyfully danced and did their part in filling the dance floor. I learned from them what was familiar to me as a *kumintang* movement, which is an inward rotation of the wrists where the hand appears to be scooping with the fingers. The arms are usually extended horizontally while bent at the elbow for the forearms to be positioned vertically. This hand movement is usually done with a waltz tempo with the footsteps being step-ball-step, stepping right-left-right, and vice versa. This waltz

movement keeps tempo in an embodied way. This was the first time I had danced what I knew as a folk dance movement not on a proscenium stage or in a rehearsal setting.

During the gathering, Abe and I were pushed by his family to dance the *pantomina* dance. The entire time was a surprise and full of laughter. I had never danced or seen the *pantomina* before, but traditionally this is a dance for newlyweds. This was played in a waltz tempo, musically nudging us to dance in a waltz step. As we were dancing, people came up to us and were attaching money onto our clothing. After our dance, we were instructed that we were to keep that money and invest this in something meaningful for us, such as a home in the future. These familial experiences are the core themes of folk dance sensibilities-- family, kinship, and community. This situation shows how dance movements created in the past continue to be performed in similar contexts of celebration and gathering.



Figure 28: Celebration in front of Uncle Eugene and family's home. Photo by the author. 02 July 2016.

Staying with the Lagrimas family also emphasized the different dialects between Bicolano, Tagalog, and English, and the distinguishing somatic sensibilities between

dance and music. This realization of diverse sensibilities would continue to expand as I connected with other artists in different regions of the Philippines. Later, awareness of these sensibilities would help navigate the *Manariwa* production as the curator, choreographer, dancer, video maker, producer, and costume designer.

In Nabua, I was told by one of our hosts, Avegail Lagrimas, that the closest place for dance classes and studios would probably be in Naga City, which was about an hour and a half drive from where we were. I learned that dance in a general sense in the Philippines is perceived as a representation of privilege and social status. Ballet is a dominant conception of the dance epitome in metropolitan locations. These images transmit and widely distribute through entertainment mediums. To expand upon this perception, I would suggest broadening inter-disciplinary practices utilizing dance as a methodology, thereby expanding upon dance for solely entertainment and industrial purposes. This would also work towards continual new dance productions and purposes that would partake in diverse aspects of societies.

After Nabua, Abe and I flew to Laoag City, Ilocos province. This was my first time there, and was imperative for me to go because this is my father's birthplace. I grew up with English and Tagalog spoken around me rather than Ilocano, so being in the Ilocos region felt like a familiar place I only knew through an embodied essence. I visited the Taoid Museum⁷¹. Here, I met someone working at the front desk of the museum who was also part of the tourism bureau of Laoag. She set up an appointment for me to go to the Nueva Era Eco Cultural Park⁷², which was about an hour and a half bumpy ride away from the city in a jeepney. Once here, two people who were active with the cultural dance performances of the cultural center, Dyna Grace Aguinaldo Paulino and Denise Marcelo, performed and taught me two dances: Indaya Tadek from the Abra region, and Indaya from the Kalinga region. Both dances are from the Tingguian peoples. Dyna and Denise are both of Ilocano descent, and grew up doing folk dances in Nueva Era. They were able to learn and instruct indigenous dances through their involvement with the Eco Cultural Park. Dyna told me that they learned the dances from

⁷¹www.news.abs-cbn.com/life/12/07/16/museum-on-cordilleran-culture-opens-in-ilocos-norte

⁷²www.old.ilocosnorte.gov.ph/nueva-era-eco-cultural-park-opens

cultural exchanges that occurred at the cultural center. People from the areas of the dance's origins taught them these dances. Dyna also shared with me that she enjoyed dancing hip-hop, but folk dances would always be her favorite. I also asked her opinion on contemporary dance adaptations of indigenous dances of the Philippines. She stated that those were things she only saw on television. This statement made me think of increasing accessibility to dance and innovation outside of metropolitan locations as an idea towards expanding the dance field. This learning exchange was memorable. I am thankful to the people who had set up this opportunity, and were supportive of my purposes there.



Figure 29: Dyna Paulino and Denise Marcelo teaching the author the dance, Indaya Tadek. Photo by Abe Lagrimas, Jr. 05 July 2016.

There was also an apparent visual connection between Hawai'i and the Ilocos region. Historically this is documented through the economic tie of migrant workers between Ilocos and Hawai'i during the plantation era. As Abe and I were walking through the city, many people wore some sort of shirt or hat with the name of a

Hawaiian island or city, establishing the visual presence of trans-national ties through families and clothing. There was also a large exit bridge on the jeepney ride back to Laoag from Nueva Era that said “Mahalo!” I envisioned what other cultural and syncretic connections between Hawai’i and Ilocos could be further explored by hearing stories of trans-national lineages from families of these places, and an embodied method of experiencing this visceral connection. This would expand upon the prevalent Philippine economic and labor narrative in Asian American Studies. I envision this as a future visual cultural and creative project.

After Laoag, we traveled south on bus about two hours to Baguio, also in the Ilocos region. Baguio is the recognized metropolitan city of the Cordillera Administrative Region, which is also recognized as the summer capital of the Philippines. Out of all the regions we had visited, Baguio was a progressive hub for Ilocano and Cordilleran arts, indigenous academia, strategizing for sovereignty, and public recognition of the five major tribes of the Cordillerans- Kankanaey, Ibaloi, I-Bontok, Kalinga and Apayao who fought to keep their land⁷³.



Figure 30: Cordilleran tribute statue located in Igorot Park, Baguio. Photo by the author. 07 July 2016.

⁷³ Igorot Park

Here, I learned that the visual media, poetry, and music are artistic strengths in Baguio. However, there were no focal Dance departments in the universities⁷⁴. Dance was usually integrated into another department, such as Fine Arts and Anthropology. Kankanaey-Igorot poet and performance artist Dumay Solinggay informed me that the study of solely dance was not common.

Dumay also invited Abe and I to sit in on an interview with a Cordilleran musician who reached out to dancers of a local university to collaborate on creating a dance for an original song she had made. She stated that the dancers did not know their traditional movements enough to improvise with the music. I figured here that what would help in the field of dance in this region would be more articulation of dance as a methodology, thereby engaging with the creative process rather than solely a presentation of preservation. I wondered how people here would respond to the work of the Matao New Performance Project and the Indigenous Dance Forum, in how dance was practiced as a cognitive methodology to interact, acknowledge, and engage with natural surroundings and culture.

In Baguio, I experienced the continuum of ritual and how the art space is constructed as a place of connecting with community and grounding. These are safe spaces for the purpose of getting together to nurture relationships. As I had experienced being in a particular safe space, people were in and out of dancing as the music was playing in the background. This displayed continual flow. As I watched my friend become entranced with the background music while we were all socializing, I noticed that her movements were fluid and continual. She also had a facial expression of being internally charged, but outwardly clear and in a trance. Her movements were original and they never repeated one another. I saw her go in and out with Igorot dance movements. In another instance, another person in the space joined her and both were dancing together in Igorot steps. Witnessing this dance space emitted for me an understanding that is difficult to articulate, because I was encapsulated by her own internal tuning with the moment.

⁷⁴ Personal conversation with Dumay Solinggay

Baguio provided for me a different perspective of the Philippines than in Manila. On the bus ride back to Antipolo, coming down the windy mountains and passing by the greenery that so reminded me of Aotearoa, I turned to the side and said to Abe, “I’m proud to be both Tagalog and Ilocano, because they both are known for having so much political and historical contention between one another. I have a clearer understanding that I’m an embodiment of how union and love transcend those divisions.” I see how the practice of art contributes to a state of internal boundlessness. This is one example of how dance and arts are healing practices.

In Manila, I attended the Dance.MNL Conference: Conversations and Connectivity in Dance⁷⁵ held at the Cultural Center of the Philippines from June 21 to June 22, 2016. This was a two-day conference hosted by Ballet Philippines, and co-organized by Clarissa Mijares Ramos of Ateneo University. The conference was the platform to see where the dance community was, and where stronger networks could develop. Day one focused on the ballet community of the Philippines. The panel provided a lineage of ballet, modern, and contemporary dance of the Philippines, and perspectives of industrializing ballet in the Philippines. In this conference, I learned of the challenges of government funding of the arts, the competition of getting audiences to come to their shows, and strategizing on how to get audiences to respond to the arts in a more appreciative manner.

There was a particular comment from a father of two young dancers. He asked why the need to bring in choreo-graphers from outside of the Philippines and why not focus on the ones who are already in the Philippines. He stated that because there are many talented dancers already within the country, why not create more opportunities for Philippine dancers to be choreo-graphers? This question raised an area of contention among some people in the room, but was necessary in considering how more inclusion of choreo-graphers and dancers could further be incorporated among the standardization and professionalization of the dance sector. Another suggestion from a woman who works with a dance program in a local high school stated that perhaps

⁷⁵www.dancemnl.com/conference

more involvement and partnerships between the professional companies and high school dance students could be cultivated to help build the dance community. I later learned that one of the goals of the conference was to get people thinking in the direction of creating a dance guild, and to network of some sort. Ballet Philippines Artistic Director, Paul Morales, supported this intention in an interview, stating that he would like to see the industrialization of dance in the Philippines⁷⁶. He shared that there are three ballet companies in Manila, which is a great achievement. “We have three full-time companies, so it means any given day of the normal week, up to 120 people are working and are professional dancers. That’s why the idea is to industrialize and to protect this and celebrate it” (Morales). In this interview, Morales further explained to me a brief history and the current situation of the professional dance sector, and that industrialization is a means to protect the sustainability of dance in the Philippines.

Day one of the conference familiarized me with the challenges of pursuing the arts as a daily means of living in the Philippines, and the necessity to consider ticket sales and global marketability as an influential component in deciding what artistic pieces are produced. This in turn affects the creative directions dance pieces are taking. However, these dance companies have undergone remarkable building processes that continued to thrive despite limited government funding.

Day two focused on contemporary dance. This second half of the conference offered great insight into conceptions of *contemporary* and how Philippine artists are expressing this. Artists Jay Cruz and Eisa Jolson spoke on their recent works. Eisa introduced her current piece at the time, performing joy and happiness through the economic industry of Hong Kong Disney and Disney characters.

Throughout my travels in Antipolo, Manila, Nabua, Laoag, and Baguio, I became more aware of the distinctive sensibilities of music, dance, and visual arts, and their mediums. Art and performance are practices of self-expression and somatic communication. I suggest for future developments to build upon awareness of distinguishing sensibilities in art forms, and if this becomes apparent among diverse

⁷⁶ Transcript of this interview is located as Appendix B

regions. I would then build upon these sensibilities as a cognitive language. I currently feel that with this thesis, I have just touched upon this somatic alphabet.

Emphasis on the ballet and modern dance forms are also maintained by a lack of government support and funding for the dance schools and programs already in operation. Competition for the limited allocation of resources further increases divides and compartmentalizations among types and purposes of dance in the Philippines. The Dance.MNL Conference was a step towards unionizing to protect working dancers. Working within the constructs of industry and government, this is works towards acknowledging dance and the arts as exemplary skills and representation of Philippine creativity within and outside of the Philippines. However, by expanding on the possibilities of dance through inter-disciplinary practices, this would broaden dance as accessible, thereby opening doors towards dance as a practice of healing, re-generation, and innovation. This would also open other sectors and opportunities for government support to come from other avenues. These are skills that should not be exclusive, but would be of service towards collective and critical development.

I question if the location of dance being structured and localized in metropolitan areas maintain a societal structure (and infrastructure) of the arts as socially inaccessible and hierarchical. In turn, dance productions emerging from larger cities as mainstream expressions of cultural identity are influenced by the ideals of economic and globalizing institutions and structures. What are the implications of creating dance production from compartmentalized and industrial influences? How does this *look* like? From a sustainable perspective, does this representation maintain economic and social disparity? While I commend the current state and continuous growth of the dance sector in the Philippines, I propose ideas for the dance field from a position of inclusion and expansion, thereby also encouraging audiences to experience art productions from a constructively critical standpoint.

I envision further expansion of the dance field by bridging the two dance tracks of ballet and modern dance forms with the Philippine folk dance forms in the university level. At UP Diliman, the dance program includes a choreo-graphic process entitled

*transcreation*⁷⁷. This entails student choreo-graphers to undergo an immersion of fieldwork with a particular tribe of the Philippines, learning and interviewing members of the tribe, and transcribing and adapting their experience into a modern, balletic, or contemporary dance choreo-graphy. While this approach is also a newer approach to choreo-graphy as research, I would suggest a final showing to the tribe of study. In this way, dance could be conceived as not only a high standard production measured by its audience size, but through a reciprocal exchange of cultures and generations. In this way, dance and performance generate valuable cultural experiences that are priceless. I imagine for Philippine dance, dances of the Philippines, to approach dance in a continuum sense rather than a fractured one. How would this emerge in creative process? How could these connective approaches to choreo-graphy and production impact approaches to nation building and collaboration?

I also propose integrating an indigenous contemporary dance approach to expand the field of the dance in the Philippines by creating dance projects that integrate a revitalization of a particular land mass or body of water through the creative process. This would generate a site-specific and indigenous relationship between people and land by working directly with the natural surroundings of the region and critically thinking through an embodied methodology towards sustainability. This would involve dancing in outdoor spaces rather than focusing on dance in the indoor studio that has the accessibility of utilizing mirrors. Projects that shift the creative process to draw from the relationship between people and land, thereby utilizing dance as an embodied methodology, nurtures an indigenous relationship that may somatically communicate with audiences by enlivening the body's cognizant sensibility. I am inspired by Charles Royal and Louise Potiki Bryant's work in establishing *Te Whare Tapere*⁷⁸. Jack Gray was also involved as one of the choreo-graphers and dancers of this project. Gray states that this research experience has enabled him "to explore the natural environment as a resource for dance making processes internationally" (Gray 2005 98).

⁷⁷ A transcript of this interview with UP students is located in Appendix C

⁷⁸ www.youtube.com/watch?v=2KVCJnoFfZo&list=PL_s8T6H0ltzUJIX7ftVCWfGQPv_NNqxQa

In the context of Filipinx located abroad, indigenous contemporary dance of the Philippines and its documentation could provide a visual and somatic source of reconnecting with one's heritage. This approach to dance can also provide opportunities for collaborating on creative methods towards mapping trans-cultural and trans-national migrations, as these mobilities are common among those of Philippine descent, thereby becoming another source of documentation besides literature. Rather, choreo-graphy and transmission would carry with it cognizant sensibilities, therefore personifying and physicalizing forms of documentation and histories. In turn, I envision inter-cultural communities utilizing dance and performance methods towards strategizing for cultural solidarity and coalition building. As with the IDF, where my co-panelist Mark Mauikānehoalani Lovell had addressed the misconception and social construction of divisions among people, my hope is that communities consider focusing on respected differences as complementary assets towards coalition strategizing, and how to optimally utilize these respected differences through collaboration.

CHAPTER 9

CREATING *MANARIWA*

After returning to O'ahu from my fieldwork as a dancer in the three indigenous contemporary dance projects and from a survey of dance in the Philippines researching my genealogy, I created a dance performance entitled *Manariwa*. This production explored elements of my Filipina identity, interweaving expressions of gender fluidity, statements of solidarity, and choreo-graphy of embodied memories. Creating *Manariwa* was an opportunity to test cultural knowledge transmission through dance. The creative process with the entire cast of dancers was from January 6 to February 10, 2017. There were two performances: the February 3rd performance was an experimental process and controlled space with a live audience; the February 10th performance was a culmination of the entire process.

This chapter is presented in four parts: 1) describing elements of shaping a flexible creative process including my intentions, prior experiences as a dancer in three indigenous contemporary dance projects, and experiences conducting a survey of dance in the Philippines; 2) production elements aside from choreo-graphy; 3) description of the dances; 4) post-performance reflection. I also interweave excerpts of journal and poetry entries created during this thesis process. A link to the video recording from the February 10th performance is included in the appendices. The February 3rd performance was also recorded, but the footage was too dark in lighting and the choreo-graphy was not visible.

CONCEPT

Manariwa was the guiding intention of the creative process and performance. In the Tagalog dialect, this word means *to refresh, to reinvigorate*. I first heard this word in the song “Pag-Ibig sa Tinubuang Lupa” by Andres Bonifacio, while I was on a study abroad program at the University of Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand in the latter half of 2014. I was first drawn to the etymology of the word— *mana*. In Māori and Hawaiian languages, *mana* translates to power, authority, and prestige, with the understanding that it involves a level of responsibility. In Tagalog, *mana* translates to a treasure that is passed down between generations. In these contexts, *mana* connotes relationship and intrinsic value. As there were already multiple layers within the etymology, there would be layers that would emerge in the work.

The process of this production was inspired and guided by ideas, inquiries, and experiences encountered prior to and throughout my fieldwork. Questions of identity, indigeneity, diaspora, and being able to organize and articulate a program of art as healing have been my impetuses for pursuing academic studies and the direction of this thesis. Particularly, my intent was to engage with dance and culture as healing in terms of mental illness and drug usage, as this was a personal and lengthy experience within my own family. Kenneth Gergen states: “...we might presume that every mental condition is accompanied by a discrete pattern of neural firing. Thus, by tuning into our bodies, we can know our ‘true feelings’” (Gergen 126). Therefore, I investigated the body as a vessel of memory, and moved with awareness that movement exploration means working through embodied memories and could lead to processes of healing.

Filipinx as working exports are dominant narratives of Philippine experience. Through *Manariwa*, I intended to support a different narrative that cognitively experiences and processes cultural connections between Philippine communities and their place of settling in migration. Filipina migrant workers account for one of the largest populations of migrant groups in the world. Rhacel Parrenas states that “...they are concentrated in three occupations: domestic services, nursing, and entertainment. ‘Entertainment’ work refers to jobs in the nightlife industry, where women work as

performers-singers and dancers-as well as hostesses” (Parrenas 146). To shift from this narrative, *Manariwa* was a choreo-graphic dialogue among the dancers, and worked with themes of diaspora, indigeneity, relationality, and culture. The production then explored how Filipinx can continue to retain and engage with their cultures while being in diverse inter-national and inter-cultural situations.

“the dreamer boarded a flight on a one-way ticket on standby.
a ticket she had secretly been saving up for,
hiding it from her six siblings, parents, and grandparents.
came to the great unknown
because she knew her future already at 10 years old
if she were to stay where she was.
if it wasn’t for her bravery in jumping into the darkness,
i wouldn’t be here” (i am the daughter of immigrants)

The overarching visions were to spiritually engage with Philippine culture through dance and innovation, and to create a boundless expression of Filipina identity through performance. Through my fieldwork and travels, I was mindful of what indigenous Filipina worldviews, sensibilities, and values are or could be. I then expressed my findings through reflective journal entries that would later help shape workshopping and the use of imagination during rehearsals with the cast of the UHM Dancers. Throughout my fieldwork, I came in contact with various Filipina artists and practitioners of dance, poetry, and visual media. I conversed and in some cases danced with them in casual and home settings so as to communicate on a personal level, thereby approaching learning from a mutual exchange and reciprocal dynamic. I was open to the natural flow of the conversation, and what may be outside the parameters of my research. This enabled me to see how other people were making connections that I did not necessary see for myself. I also learned and experienced how different dance and art forms activate diverse somatic sensibilities. Through these conversations with various artists, I learned that there are many Filipinas of a younger generation that are creating practices to cultivate a connection with their ancestors and spirituality. This is inspiring to know that indigenous Philippine practices and worldviews are upheld by Filipinas worldwide.

There are similar and distinctive parallels about each indigenous contemporary dance experience I had. All projects showed me how perspectives are situational and unique to context. Geography and natural surroundings have distinct relationships with people who share these landscapes and call these areas their homes. Through the Indigenous Dance Forum, I learned that regular opportunity for a genuine quality of acknowledgement and relationship to one another is necessary, especially in the metropolitan lifestyle and cityscape of the present day Mannahatta. How does this sort of engagement become habit and lifestyle, rather than occasional open entertainment? Indigenous engagement work must come from diverse groups and people targeting different aspects towards connection. How can we further develop solidarities and coalitions to mobilize? IDF immersed me as a dancer, observer, and transcriber in ceremony through dance and performance with a global indigenous community upon Mannahatta-- a highly instrumental metropolitan cityscape to the operations of the US. IDF was effective in bringing people together and expanding perspectives of indigenous Mannahatta, but must be acknowledged as process-based and a relationship. This encourages consistency in practicing a vibrant approach towards co-existence. Through *Fanhasso*, I became more aware of distance created through labels of “traditional” and “contemporary”, and “native” and “diaspora.” I was invigorated with the task to center myself above these constructs, especially in creative moments. Through our lineages, and present moments that encompass past-present-future, we are simultaneously all of these things. This realization of self influenced how I perceive my creative space. Through I Moving Lab, I learned how each place must be engaged with in different ways that resonate with the community and space. This was apparent through the experience of touring and traveling to different islands of Hawai’i. A skill of performance is not only presenting what we have and know as performers and people, but to have flexibility in generating reciprocal experience among audiences and communities. All of these lessons were instrumental in shaping a flexible approach towards *Manariwa*.

From researching my genealogy through dance in the Philippines, I had only scratched the surface. I became familiar with existing communities of artists who utilize artistic mediums to disrupt societal fixations on economy and politics, and express

connections with their ancestors. I also learned that dance is a field and practice that is continually growing and expanding as a national expression in the Manila region. However, I see myself contributing to the expansion of dance purposes to connect with the physicality of land and cityscape. There are many potential possibilities for dance in the Philippines, and therefore this is a vibrant time for creation. *Manariwa* is an expression engaging with diverse dance possibilities, but also part of the process towards cultivating relationship among community, the very lands we walk upon, and the people and cultures we come across. This relationship is my personal narrative in experiencing myself as a Filipina based in California, currently residing in Hawai'i, and cultivating connection with my Tagalog, Ilocano, and Kapampangan ancestries. This reflects an ongoing and consistent experiment asking *what are my embodied memories, and how can I utilize dance to discover and create myself?*

PRODUCTION ELEMENTS

Times and Locations

The February 3rd, 2017 performance was entitled *MANARIWA: Part 1; Performance Lab*. Time of event was 7:30 PM- 8:30 PM, with a 30 minute Question and Answer segment to follow. Location was the UHM Dance Building Studio, 1820 Edmondson Road, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822.

The February 10th, 2017 performance was entitled *MANARIWA: Part 2*. Time of event was 5:30 PM- 7:00 PM, with a 30 minute Question and Answer segment to follow. Location was the Hālau O Haumea, Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies, 2645 Dole St, Honolulu, HI 96822.

Performance Media

I utilized video projection to play in the background of the dance space during the performance. This video changed in editing from February 3rd to February 10th performances. This change was in the segments of “Indigenous Voices” and “Standing Rock.” After seeing how this narrative flowed in the February 3rd performance, I felt the connection between these stories should support one another more. The ocean visual and sound were utilized between transitions to emulate moving across the ocean. The ocean is also our connector.

The layout of the space during February 10th also included a drawing installation. White poster boards were tied to one side of the hālau space onto a broken gate (this gate could not be opened). The audience was invited to trace their hands onto the poster board with markers. Hands had to be traced upon an already existing hand.

Music

The February 3rd performance utilized recorded music. The beginning song was “Omo Tai” by Hiroshima. “Manawahine” utilized the dancers’ breath as accompaniment. “Ray” was danced to Gingee’s “Gong Spirit.” The dance circle was accompanied by a compilation of Cordilleran voices expressing climate change and indigenous issues. The second half of “Standing Rock” was danced to a drum recording of Abe Lagrimas, Jr. “Maglalatik” and “Batok/Ilaw” were danced to recorded versions also by Abe Lagrimas, Jr. “Hawai’i Aloha” was sung by Pakalana Agliam and accompanied with guitar by Marley Aiu.

The February 10th performance was accompanied with live music by Abe (drums), Randy Wong (bass), and Reggie Padilla (saxophone, flute). Pakalana also sang “Hawai’i Aloha.”

Costuming

For the February 3rd performance, dancers all wore black spandex shorts and a spaghetti strap top. Darkness was emphasized in this showing, and was apparent in the lighting of the space and in this attire. During the dance circle, Charessa wore a red malong I received from Baguio. During the poetry piece, I utilized five meters of Abra fabric I purchased from Laoag to portray a skirt that would eventually be tied to my body. Pakalana and Lihau were invited to wear anything they felt was semi-formal and comfortable for them.

For the February 10th performance, dancers wore white t-shirts I dyed with red dirt obtained from Aiea. I also cut these shirts to create jumpers. Ray wore grey shorts and a black shirt. Musicians were free to wear what they would jointly decide upon. This was orange and brown shirts that Randy had. Randy and Abe had previously worn

these shirts for gigs many years ago, and so they had a symbolic and nostalgic feeling for them. Pakalana and Tavehi were invited to wear anything they felt was semi-formal and comfortable to them.

Production Cast

February 3rd Performance (Part I):

Dancers:

Marley Aiu

Kianna-Miel P. Dizon

Charessa Fryc

Lexi Gilman

Līhau Ichinose

Ray Kalani Pascual

Toni Temehana Pasion

Chantelle Sonoda

Hepsy Yue Zhang

Musicians:

Pakalana Agliam (vocalist)

Marley Aiu (guitarist)

February 10th Performance (Part II):

Dancers:

Kianna-Miel P. Dizon

Charessa Fryc

Lexi Gilman

Ray Kalani Pascual

Grace Parson

Toni Temehana Pasion

Chantelle Sonoda

Tavehi Tafiti

Hepsy Yue Zhang

Musicians:

Abe Lagrimas Jr. (drums)

Reggie Padilla (saxophone, flute)

Randy Wong (bass)

Pakalana Agliam (vocalist)

Forms of Documentation

Social media outlets, Facebook and Instagram, were utilized for promotion and documentation. Short reflections of the rehearsal process, clips of rehearsal footage, and costuming preparations were posted. A Facebook event page was created for both performances, and short biographies and photos of each dancer were posted on various days leading up to the events. I also utilized a private Facebook group to post rehearsal videos and group messages to the dancers.

Social media posts displayed elements of movement, costuming, photoshoot experimentation, and blog posts of how I was processing the intersection of dance, social justice, and accessing ancestral knowledge. Various posts also included posting flashbacks of dance clips, family reunions, and other experiences of fieldwork in the Philippines, and how I was transmitting these experiences in Hawai'i. In this production, social media was utilized as open documentations. This added an element of inclusivity and transparency in the creative process.

I have provided one video link of the February 10th performance located in the appendices. Keita Beni is the videographer of this recording. This performance was also live-streamed via Facebook.

Throughout my fieldwork and rehearsal process, I had written reflective journals and recorded various videos of significant sites and experiences. These entries are interwoven and referenced throughout various chapters of this thesis.

DESCRIPTIONS OF DANCE PIECES

“Bari Bari Apo”

This choreo-graphy is a transcription of an Ilocano chant into movement. I had received this chant from Lane Wilcken after undergoing a *batok* ceremony. It is woven with a choreo-graphy entitled *Kapwa*⁷⁹. Charessa and I had previously choreo-graphed *Kapwa* in November 2016. This choreo-graphy explored concepts of mirroring and weight balancing.

Transcribing this chant to movement allowed us to activate the space through dance, choreography, and embodied resonances-- mediums in which space and placement sensibilities are in effect.

Dancers: Marley Aiu, Kianna-Miel P. Dizon, Charessa Fryc, Lexi Gilman, Ray Kalani Pascual, Grace Parson, Chantelle Sonoda, Hepsy Yue Zhang, Toni Pasion

Choreography: Charessa Fryc, Toni Pasion

“Mana Wahine”

The purpose of this piece is to cultivate somatic connection between the dancers utilizing breath and elongated movements. Drawing awareness to breath and movement is a re-membrance that our first rhythm is our heartbeat and breath-- a connection that unifies and is a source for grounding.

A pangalay instructor I had learned from in Marikina, Rizal (Philippines), Ligaya Fernando-Amilbangsa, said in one of our practices that *pangalay* does not need accompanied music because it is a dance form born of the oceans. Breath is the

⁷⁹ This is a Tagalog word meaning *seeing the self in another*.

instrument. This element enables sustenance of the dance form, as well as continual exploration in its possibilities. I am inspired by this concept of grounding, meditation, and movement.

Dancers: Marley Aiu, Kianna-Miel P. Dizon, Charessa Fryc, Lexi Gilman, Ray Kalani Pascual, Grace Parson, Chantelle Sonoda, Hepsy Yue Zhang

“Ray”

This piece is an expression of gender fluidity, utilizing various elements of performance and dance. A post-performance reflection by Ray is located as Appendix I.

Choreo-graphed and performed by Ray Kalani Pascual

“I Am Carrying Three Feathers”

This piece voices poetry from Kankanaey-Igorot poet and performance artist, Dumay Solinggay. This poem was written in January 2017 as Dumay travelled to India to represent the Philippines in the prestigious Hyderabad Literary Festival.

“This poem is a ritual for traveling-- to ask guidance from the ancestors for safe travel and for whatever might come to be good” (Solinggay).

The accompanying dance resembles a duo of seen and unseen-- one who travels across lands, and Spirit who helps prepare and guide the way.

Dancers: Hepsy Yue Zhang, Toni Pasion

“Indigenous Voices/Dances of Water”

Dancers create an improvisational *pangalay* circle. They dance to the rhythm of breath and language with the dance form born from the Sulu archipelago waters.

These particular dancers were brought together as students in Wayne Mendoza's Philippine Dance course at UHM.

Dancers: Charessa Fryc, Lexi Gilman, Toni Pasion

"Standing Rock"

Dancers emulate growing seedlings, beginning from the ground level to gradually growing to mid-level. As a drum solo plays, dancers emit tiny explosions and improvisational "release."

The concept of this segment was for the dancers to work with an internal energy during the Standing Rock video. As the drum solo was happening, dancers worked with weight exchanges as another form of build-up, into a release as a somatic feeling of liberation.

Dancers: Lexi Gilman, Hepsy Yue Zhang, Toni Pasion

"Maglalatik"

There have been various versions of this dance's origin story. The story that this particular restaging and choreo-graphy considers is the kali (Philippine fighting style) form that has crossovers with this folkdance.

Today, this dance is mostly danced and performed by men. This dance allowed us to practice coordination, vigilance, and teamwork. It is intended to envision possibilities of Philippine dance.

Dancers: Marley Aiu, Kianna-Miel P. Dizon, Charessa Fryc, Lexi Gilman, Ray Kalani Pascual, Grace Parson, Chantelle Sonoda, Hepsy Yue Zhang, Toni Pasion

Kali instructor and advisor: Joseph Manalo Gorre

“Batok/Ilaw”

*Batok*⁸⁰ began as an embodied exploration into my physical movements while receiving my *batok* just above my left ankle. This was my fourth ceremony, and was an especially significant experience. This choreo-graphy is an investigation of this embodied memory. Receiving this particular *batok* entailed my body continuously turning while lying down to fulfill the circular design. I was impelled to choreo-graph this experience.

Ilaw is inspired by the Philippine folk dance, *Pandanggo Sa Ilaw*. An origin story shared of this folkdance is how this depicts catching the stars at nighttime. I translate this as a story of survival and persistence in finding one’s way through the dark and generating warmth. The creative process of this choreo-graphy entailed exploring how one may generate heat within the body, while balancing light at the palm of one’s hand.

Batok dancers: Marley Aiu, Ray Kalani Pascual, Grace Parson, Hepsy Yue Zhang
Choreo-graphy by: Ray Kalani Pascual, Hepsy Yue Zhang, Toni Pasion

Ilaw dancers: Kianna-Miel P. Dizon, Charessa Fryc, Lexi Gilman, Chantelle Sonoda, Toni Pasion

“Hawai‘i Aloha”

Dancers came from different ends of the performance space, and danced their hula versions of “Hawai‘i Aloha.” I interpreted this mele through hula, and danced it out of joy to dance.

Dancers: Tavehi Tafiti, Toni Pasion

⁸⁰ Philippine hand-tapped tattoo

POST-PERFORMANCE REFLECTION

Multiple layers and subjectivities continue to unfold after the performance: from the dancers of Philippine heritages who gradually became more specific in stating their lineages in each instance of introduction, to those of non-Philippine heritage who have relationships with Filipinx and articulated remembrances of their Philippine experiences, to the uncertainty of one's own cultural heritage and revealing a desire to know, to navigating what it means for non-Hawaiians to be in Hawai'i and how this context differs from living on the continental US.

Reflecting upon the introduction chapter of this thesis and the necessity to articulate performance, practicing transparency also aided the feeling of liberation. Also, during IML, we worked through any technical difficulties and non-unison timing in group choreo-graphy during performance, accepting these incidents as meant to happen. Transparency was one of the IML philosophies that aided in blurring divisions between audience and performer, and to create ceremony through performance. This inspired me, and so transparency was important to my process, philosophy, and being.

Approaching Filipina identity through cultural artistic innovation heightened my understanding of how art, culture, and spirituality are interwoven. The medium of the body also immerses into the body's cognition as somatic communication and repositories of human experience. Suggestions for further research could be incorporation of these awarenesses towards dance and movement therapy. Another hope is that cognitive ways of knowing may increasingly be valued in the university approach towards conducting research. Institutional education and curriculum may be shaped to implement culturally specific values and knowledge transmission, so as to genuinely provide an equal quality of education for indigenous peoples and peoples of color that are culturally empathic towards diverse ways of knowledge transmission.

Reflection on Gender

The dance “Mana Wahine” was the first choreo-graphy created for this production. This was initially performed for the UHM Dance Department semester show that took place in October 2016 entitled *Delightfully Bizarre*. The dancers of this piece were Kianna Dizon, Charessa Fryc, Lexi Gilman, and me. Originally, the choreo-graphy was accompanied by a spoken word piece performed by Kiana Rivera. The spoken word piece is entitled *Women’s Voices/All In*⁸¹ composed by Kiana and me.

I did not directly intend for a gender dynamic in the show until after a few run-throughs of “Mana Wahine.” Intuitively, I felt that we needed to balance the creative energy. As we broke off into our working groups during a rehearsal, I proposed for Ray to develop a solo choreo-graphy on gender fluidity. This process involved sharing information with him of pre-colonial understandings of gender complementarity of the Philippines⁸², and paralleled this with spiritual and pre-colonial understandings of mahu in Hawaiian culture. Ray explored expressing female and male energies, and how mahu are important leaders in communities. Ray’s task was to translate his identity into choreo-graphy. Unexpectedly, the song *Bebot* by the Black Eyed Peas started playing aloud as I was scrolling my playlist for music. This was a funny moment, but also an expansive moment into a somatic jolt of energy, bold statements, and use of language. This made me smile, and I realized that we needed this moment of celebration and uplift in the performance. This feeling is what this particular piece would be.

Ray did not want to dance to *Bebot*, but did want the upbeat feel of music, and so we continued to scroll through the playlist. We came across L.A. Filipina DJ, Gingee’s song *Gong Spirit*, and Ray approved of this. The task I proposed to him was to explore the space, to be bold, to consider the history of mahu and pre-colonial ideals of gender in the Philippines, and to confidently and undoubtedly translate this into movement.

We recollected towards the end of rehearsal, and the dancers presented the dances we had all worked on to one another, as was our regular ritual at the conclusion

⁸¹ Located as Appendix A

⁸² www.univie.ac.at/ksa/apsis/aufi/wstat/mujer.htm

of rehearsals. We presented the dances in a circular formation. As Ray performed this developing piece, I suggested that he break the fourth wall and add interactions with the audience. He then jolted across the circle to multiple people, tapping their heads, shaking their hands, lying down and staring at them, etc. This was a brilliant improvisation. We then suggested he emphasize the detailed wrist, elbow, and shoulder rotations he was succinctly doing as he slowly strutted. This emphasized a less jolting energy, but still commanding of the performance space. During later rehearsals, as we continued giving one another feedback, Ray emphasized his movements that depicted him being pulled between two sides-- his right and left sides of his body. I translated this pulling between the right and left sides as a pull between the male paternal side and the female maternal side.

February 10th Performance Documentation

The following is a documentation of the February 10th performance. I posted this on Facebook to conclude the social media postings that had been reporting on the process.

“I’ve gotta give major props to the projects I’ve been apart of the past year, and the mentorship and friendship of Jack and Dākot-ta as family. Many of these processes came from creative moments, debriefs, bravery, and the vibe of jumping right in. Making the space to experience a beautiful facet of culture and how it can continue to manifest things we dream of.

The dancers all came with their own stories— their own choreo-graphies. I could not impose my ideas onto them. I intended instead for them to draw from their cores, to create from who they were.

For this reason, improvisation was a part of the performance. Improvisation means still in active creating mode. It keeps things fresh, fulfilling on another level the intention of the entire choreo-graphic process: MANARIWA— to refresh, to reinvigorate.

At 5pm, we were continuing to set up. People were already arriving as early as 4:45pm, which surprised me, but hey, adaptation and urgency are two elements we welcomed from the very beginning.

5:20pm, Kaha'i, our leader and playwright from the short play I had recently been a part of, arrived— which was a very meaningful surprise, because he was not sure he could make it. His arrival provided a clarity and readiness, and I asked him in that moment to 'oli komo us in at 5:30.

We finished up our last preparations in the back room. The dancers and I had our final moments of togetherness before the official opening.

“Go for it. Don't regret not giving. Give your absolute all.”

Three deep breaths, and we left the room.

We gathered everyone to collect outside of the hālau. Kaha'i stood inside.

In the silence, there was a very clear understanding of the sacredness of opening. All the preparations, the moment-to-moment pushing to fulfill the message, all culminated into what would then shift into manifestation once I would 'oli aloha and ask permission to come into the halau.

Kaha'i reciprocated an 'oli to welcome us in.

And then we were on.

We then ran our last piece with the musicians, because yes... keeping in alignment with the freshness, we had only one prior rehearsal with the musicians the day before. Another element to keep us on our toes.

We then opened the floor to convergence. Pakalana and Tavehi were teaching people “Hawai'i Aloha.” My buddy Daven came up and said “ey, I got my ukulele if you want me to join!” Yes, of course you can, and off he went accompanying the singing. On the other side of the hālau, we had an installation where people were invited to imprint their hands onto poster boards. In the middle of the space, a few of the dancers were teaching a game we had developed during the process of making our choreo-graphies.

The musicians started jamming as they do.

Joe, our kali instructor and our cook, provided *turon* and *salabat*. Charessa's mom provided *bibinka* in banana leaves.

Marley, our trooper dancer who had to take on other roles in the production due to dislocating her shoulder in last week's performance, walked around with a jar

for donations to Standing Rock. She also was our tech person during the show and taking care of the projector.

And then the program commenced.

Because our process entailed so much of connecting with one another and our breath as foundational, we began in the silence.

A convergence of breath and circles, with a visual of Angono Petroglyphs in the background— an offering, a continuance of Abe and my visit to this sacred place last summer.

A recollection and convergence of Philippine creativity then and now.

It continued into “Manawahine”— a dance created last September with three of the dancers. This dance really was an exercise that requires the dancers to utilize breath as cues, take initiative, and work as one.

Ray would then emerge out of the center, with a dance that broke the fourth wall, and broke whatever else walls. His dance displayed the embodiment of female/male, a jolt of strength and elegance in one.

We then shifted into voicing a poem by Dumay Solinggay, speaking of travel, and the traveler carrying the sacredness of friendship and blessing gifted to her through three feathers. It voiced the continuity and connection of ancestors into today.

Toni and Hepsy’s dance was a visual of seen and unseen-- emergence out of the dark, as represented by a fabric from our travels in my dad's hometown of Laoag.

The program shifted into voicing an Igorot worldview of climate change, its connection to ancestral domains, and the Cordillera region coming together to fight deforestation.

Toni, Charessa, and Lexi created a full circle in putting to practice their learning of pangalay, a dance form birthed from waters. They had met in UHM’s Philippine Dance course, and to continue to enliven this form beyond the classroom setting, the space was set up to do so.

The theme of travel (migration) then wove through with the ocean, and we listened to voices of Standing Rock. Hepsy, Lexi, and Toni became seeds that would grow into a freeing burst of energy, welcoming and encouraging the diverse dance forms/languages of each person.

This segment brought in one place the understanding that what affects one, affects another. And when we've created space, what will we do with it? In voicing Standing Rock, we bring out the dances of waters, and the energies of re-generation through seeds and growth, because this is what we have in the given moment. While creating space for more possibilities in the future, it reflected the urgency of Now, and asks what's been passed down to us, what do we have, and how can we come together and use it? It was the practice of voicing what we can't overlook, and to give our fullness no matter who it is.

We then went into Maglalatik.

Reconceptualized with its origins of disguising kali training from the Spanish occupiers in the Philippines, we brought it back and reflected that.

We concluded with a choreo-graphy created out of my experience of receiving a particular *batok*, and studying its designs and circumstances. The choreo-graphic process was the method of understanding, opening up sensibilities through space, partner work, sound and rhythm.

This is a different stage and understanding of creation than I've been accustomed to, that fulfills the multilayered and constant inquisitiveness I've had regarding culture, relationship, dance, and social justice. I am so grateful for my foundations shaped from growing up with my former dance groups, as my experiences with them have led me here.

Right now is a beautiful unknowing and constant creation in the immediacy of now. Expression in all our fullnesses, navigating through the complex mess with no fear and absolute trust in the spirit of our ancestors, and pushing for the bravery to live up to our dreams, is the vibe that will sustain the next four years and beyond.

At the same time, this event was just a moment. It's done now. But now continuing to build with the vibe of gathering and standing up, of creativity as sustenance, and trusting our intuition and its productions.

THAT'S A WRAP. MAHALO TO EVERYONE INVOLVED. TRULY AND FULLY, I'M GRATEFUL." (Pasion, 12 February 2017)



Figure 31: Top row, left to right: Grace Parson, Marley Aiu, the author, Lexi Gilman, Hepsy Zhang, Pakalana Agliam, Tavehi Tafiti. Bottom row: Charessa Fryc, Kianna Dizon, Chantelle Sonoda, Ray Pasqual. Photo by Bobbie Gilman. 10 February 2017.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION: A FILIPINA PERSPECTIVE ON INDIGENOUS CONTEMPORARY DANCE

Among the elements I learned of indigenous contemporary dance from my participation in the three productions are: collaboration, inclusivity, transparency, focus on the process, significance in preparing space, upholding the people of the land, and honoring relationships. Surveying dance in the Philippines allowed me to see the varieties of dance in the indigenous, professional, and familial/communal sectors. This was an approach to learning my genealogy through a somatic and place-based approach. This experience continues to unfold in the present day, thereby cultivating my spiritual relationship to genealogy. I have learned that developing a practice that utilizes dance and performance as a methodology, in turn expands upon critical thinking through engagement. Many of my ideas, lessons, and theories are motivated by my practice. I notice a change in verbiage and understanding of time that differs from university institutioned cycles of time.

Throughout these three segments of indigenous contemporary dance, my perspective as a Filipina participating in these projects allowed me to recognize Philippine presence in Mannahatta, Guåhan, and Hawai'i. In Mannahatta, Filipinas are prevalent in the arts. I noticed engagement and solidarity work with diverse cultural communities. On Guåhan, I observed Philippine presence that is integral to the operations of community. For example, many FestPac coordinators were of Philippine descent. Also, the decor of the nipa huts that were stations for each participating island were imported from the Philippines, as well as the lauhala woven lei that were given to each delegate. Another example of Philippine presence was at the location of one of our rehearsal areas on Ypao Beach. This area is called the Sampaguita Pavilion. Its signage is located on the uppermost part of the outside wall, stating that the location was sponsored and taken care of by the Filipino Ladies Association of Guam. These visual examples of “invisible care” are how I perceived Philippine presence on Guåhan. There were also conversations of the large population of Philippine presence upon the

island, and if this was a deterrence towards Chamorro culture. In my observations and experience upon Guåhan during this time frame, there were Philippine contributions from many community roles. How can this inter-cultural collaboration and flow of operations influence inclusive frameworks for trans-indigenous solidarities, cultural innovation, development, and revitalization efforts? On Moloka'i, the IML group received many comments on how Filipinx are integral to Hawaiian culture. For example, there are many kumu hula who are of mixed heritage and Philippine descent. IML conjoined as community, and raised collective awareness of indigenous issues, cultural innovations, and trans-national relations.

The Philippine experience and presences among these locations, and being in the process and production of performance reflected diverse situations of trans-national migration and mobility. An observation shared with me in conversation with Gray while on Guåhan was that Filipinx abroad tend to become subsumed into another culture. I relate to this statement given my own upbringing in predominantly Latinx and Mexican communities, as well as my current experience as a graduate student residing in Honolulu. A common statement I hear from Filipinx on Hawai'i and on Guåhan is that their families had been away from the Philippines for many generations, and would not know where to look for the roots of their Philippine heritage. This is a factor in the subsuming situation. How, then, can resources for genealogy and cultural heritage be accessible or developed outside of the Philippines? What creative ways and resources can help facilitate this? How can the arts mend genealogical gaps?

Throughout my fieldwork and in my experiences, I witnessed and met many Filipinx utilizing artistic practices to connect to deeper understandings of their cultural identities, and tailoring these practices to their current situations. This deters from popular inquiries of how tradition and indigeneity are relevant to the present day. These art practices are utilized to connect to a source that transcends present day societal structures, thereby displaying art as Philippine adaptation. I am curious of emerging art that acknowledges genealogy as a continuum of creativity, and what this would manifest in Philippine contexts.

I have documented how dance and performance cultivate community building. I now strategize further steps towards applying these lessons in social justice-centered spaces. How can art build toward solidarity and coalitions? Art empowers subjective interpretations and being. This quality is critical in solidarity and coalition building that perceives diversity as a strength and necessity. Art in these contexts of solidarity building is a medium that transcends social constructions and ascriptions. Strategy is a creative and charged energy. However, to avoid risks of color-blinding societies and racial and sexist inequities already in effect, I propose situating art in intersections of marginalization, and activating creative and artistic energy to de-construct, transcend, and/or heal. This ensures that art is not perceived as solely luxury, but truly for mending and transformational purposes.

One of the questions I had prior to my fieldwork was on determining what Philippine values that Filipinx could derive a creative process from. In my experience throughout my fieldwork, the value of family kinship is strongly prevalent. I also critically question how the Tagalog value of *kapwa*, seeing the self in the other, may be perceived to cultivate the relationship between people and natural environment. Royal states, “Lying at the heart of indigenous knowledge is kinship between ourselves and the natural world and this idea asks us, how much of the degradation we see in our world today a projection or product of the disequilibrium we see inside ourselves?” (Royal 2005 5). My hope is that this thesis inspires us to re-evaluate our bodies in relation to our natural surroundings. *Kapwa* in this sense would shift focus from anthropocentrism to indigenous relationship. I also hope that this inspires us to expand upon the economic lens that is prevalently utilized when considering Philippine ties, and consider cultural and perhaps ontological similarities among neighboring landmasses as an approach to link understandings of a larger genealogy.

This thesis has documented how dance and performance are methods for cultural continuity, cultural integrity, and community building. Through the work and practices of Eisa Jocson and Salvie Makiling, mapping space and mobility in relation to the body are ways in which Filipina artists are transcending gendered, social, and racial stereotypes through trans-national mobilities. This thesis also documents cultural

gatherings and community building through dance and performance. Dance and performance are practiced as cognitive methodologies. I have also suggested further projects and ideals towards artistic development as cultural sustenance.

APPENDIX A

"Women's Voices/ All In" by Toni Pasion and Kiana Rivera

I stand taller knowing that women
are portals for creation and growth.
I see women, vibrant and strong,
Voicing the needs of their people,
They are the glue of community.
They show me
How to be a strong woman.
Do what needs to be done,
There's no other way.
They teach me how to smartly envision;
Attack poison with remedy.
To be wise and employ sight in all directions.
I don't only see in one line.
Land doesn't work that way.
In solidarity, we stand upon the foundations of our ancestors.
Kū Kia'i Mauna
As the ice melts into the nurturing rivers for the people,
We understand that Water is Life.
To those on the Standing Rock Reservation, we dedicate our breath to you.
To those who wake up in the States, growing up seeing violence and knowing the need
to be vigilant,
we stand with you in honoring that
Black Lives Matter.
I'm tired of violence from bigotry.
America,
Founded upon the idea that paper means worth.
Dehumanizing humans, with the value that a dead president is worth more than a living
person.
I'm fed UP.
and I'm in.
I'm in because I'm angry.
I'm in because an ignorant world wants me to shut up.

I'm in because the only truth is love, a love without boundaries, a love that refuses to
deny
brothers and sisters time and compassion and contact.
I'm in because I refuse to shut the world out.
I choose to love and accept people.
I'm in because my definition of God's love is boundless, open, free
Free to love all of mankind, because love doesn't shut doors, doesn't shame,

love doesn't hang people from church rafters as an example of what NOT to be.
I'm in because my version of God's love is an open door policy and whoever chooses to
leave, I choose to love.
I'm in because all those who go ignored, who go unheard want to be IN too, but your
love continues to shut them out.
So I'm here to shut you up, Push you aside, because
I'm In
And i'm bringing THEM in with me.
The fire in my belly
Erupts upwards through my mouth
Voicing
The life force that bounds us together.

APPENDIX B

Transcript: Interview with Paul Morales, Artistic Director of Ballet Philippines

13 July 2016

Where did you study dance?

I studied here [in the Philippines]. I did Theater in college. I was a Dance minor. I spent a lot of time in the studio and here. For Laban Center [in London], I did a conservatory course. You join the company and you have to do some sort of world tour. So you study for six months, then you perform. So yeah, it was very interesting for me. This idea the touring, all of that is something I've passed on and done with all the companies I've worked with.

On a spiritual level. everything is connected. If you look under the layers, there's a lot of connections. I'm not a purist at all. I'm a pluralist. Because I feel the morality in things and I guess that's the spiritual level also, despite how alien something might look to you, you actually might have a resonance to it for reasons you might not know.

What got you interested in dance, and what dance forms did you study?

My mom said the first time I saw a big stage, I ran to it and started jumping around. So I think there was something really natural about dance for me. But formal dance, first things I learned actually were Hawaiian and Tahitian which was very popular in Manila in the 70s, but this would be like "Pearly Shells" and more of a *Blue Hawai'i* point of view. But Tahitian is probably my first performance, and also folk dance. I did this in elementary school. We did a lot of the folk dances, and some jazz dancing as well.

Then in high school, I didn't really dance so much until I was in the fourth year. But I was dating someone who was part of the chorus line, and I think it's important because it helped me to appreciate dance, and fall in love with dance more. Also I was in the dance group in high school, we were doing more like, popular dances, and stuff like

that. In college I was in other courses... Political Science, and then I shifted to Theater. I started doing a lot of theater. A lot of chorus work. We did *Hair* the musical, which is very very *dancey*. Our choreo-grapher is actually in San Francisco now. He's in the universities too. He's a professor there.

And then that got me into ballet. I was lucky that I was kind of young. I was at university when I was 15. So at 16, I found my first scholarship for ballet. And I guess ballet because it's so serious. It's so difficult. And I was just barely young enough to catch up. So I did a few years of that in UP in Dilliman. And then I got a scholarship here. I started dancing here. It was through here that I got a scholarship to England.

Ballet Philippines?

Ballet Philippines.

At the Laban Center. So I would say primarily I'm a contemporary dancer now. But all of that is part of it. But I do like movement. I did a little bit of ballroom, some martial arts... these past 10 years a lot of yoga. More like as therapy. One is that you realize your body is giving up, and doing a lot of yoga, which is very introspective, I feel it really helped me find my hips, my back again, and stuff like that. I would say whatever level of fitness I have is through yoga.

As Artistic Director, what stories do you want to tell through dance?

Ballet Philippines has always done two things, which are to strive for excellence and to strive for innovation. So in terms of the stories we tell, we really tell the classics, and I would say very contemporary or really Filipino themes. I've been director for 7 years, and I've done a lot of historical inspired pieces in very different approaches. I do love to encourage younger choreo-graphers. I'm very open-minded with that. Because we perform in a very big theater, the pieces generally have to be more family oriented or more popular. We always take the time to do something out of the box also.

What do you mean by Filipino themes? What would be a Filipino theme?

The first ballet I did was based on the *Noli Me Tangere* by Rizal. If you think about it,

that's really the cusp of things. He wrote it during the time where there wasn't the idea of *what is Filipino?*

But I think, because we're a very young nation—it's only been independent since 1945, the revolution, turn of the century—depends on how you think about it, maybe a century old, the consciousness of being Filipino.

So it interests me very much how the themes resonate, despite the fact that it was written primarily in Spanish that nobody can read now in the Philippines. But still a lot of the themes from that time sort of go through religion, nationalism, identity.

Another project we have is *Rock Supremo*. You can download all the music online. *Noli Me Tangere* is a fictional work, but *Rock Supremo* is really inspired about the life of Andres Bonifacio. And we did it with Rock Ed, which is a rock for education foundation. And what they did was this was for his sesquicentennial, 150th birth anniversary. Bonifacio is what they call the father of the Philippine Revolution, except, if you compare him to Washington, he had a very tragic life. He actually ended up being executed by his own people. This project was very interesting because we work with 10 different popular bands, Filipino bands, and they put together new music inspired by his life.

When was this production?

Maybe 3 or 4 years ago.

Can you tell me more on Encantada? Are there recordings?

There's a few.

So one of the things I have been doing as director is to try to bring back the big pieces. Ballet Philippines is very lucky in that it has a very long repertoire. So, of course the founders— Alice Reyes, she has a lot of work, and Agnes Locsin, she is my teacher. We have done *Encantada* recently like four years ago. So *Encantada* is definitely one of the seminal pieces. The three founders of Ballet Philippines are all very interesting, I would say, because they were all freelance dancers choreo-graphers at that time, but they had all also performed with the Bayanihan Dance Company. Alice and Eddie, the two founders, were actually the first tour. And Alice's father was really a folk dancer,

Philippine folk dance, but she did her Masters at Sarah Lawrence modern dance. She put up a company when she got back. I would say that really helped color the company and it really was always somehow rooted. So even in the very first few shows, you have pieces that are distinctly Filipino, or pursue Filipino themes. For Alice, her two important pieces—the first is *Amada*. *Amada* is based on a short story by Nick Joaquin the national artist. It's also about the assassination of the general governor during the Spanish time. You see that it's modern dance. It's original Filipino music for orchestra. There's really a lot of sense... her teacher was Hanya Holm and *Betsy Schwanberg* (SP), and they were I guess very open minded about finding your own modern dance. It's not like Graham that you have to do Graham. So she developed her own choreography on those themes. I would say I really follow her ideas which is: One—that anything that the Filipino does is somehow Filipino. So Alice, she has a lot of Filipino work, she has a lot of landmark pieces. But she also has pieces that you would say are international. She has her own *Cinderella* ballet, for example. She was more broadminded in that sense.

So after Alice you have Denisa Reyes, and Denisa is very creative. She put up *Neo-Filipino*—a show that happened in New York first, that happened with a lot of freelance Filipino artists there—and that whole idea is a new idea of *who* or *what is Filipino*? In fact there's a new Filipino show coming up in October. It's also the collaboration among arts. So hers was more an out-of-the-box approach to contemporary dance. How out of the box could it be?

Agnes Locsin, who I think should be a national artist also... she really had a big impact because she... she has a book about her choreo-graphy—this idea of neo-ethnic. So while you can say a lot of Agnes's work is Filipino, before that, Agnes was the first one to focus on the idea of neo-ethnic choreo-graphy, which is modern dance mixed with ethnic movement.

I grew up with her. I was part of the first Ballet Philippines too. I was part of the first cast of *Encantada*.

Encantada. They did something special. It's based on the different *diwatas* and the different folk festivals. So the ending is a little inspired by the *sinulog*. It touches these

themes. But the movement, and how they constructed it, and the music which is by Joey Ayala, I think makes it really special.

But she also has her other pieces as well. For example, she has a *Midsummer Night's Dream*, which she doesn't like (laughs). She also has *Elias*, another character from *Noli Me Tangere*— a full ballet that's based on this character. He's a minor character in the novel, but she did the whole ballet about him. He's the proletariat farmer.

My ballet is called *Crisostimo Ibarra*, it's the lead character.

In a sense, Ballet Philippines has always been mining(?) Philippine literature, Philippine history, and also world literature and world history.

What are some of the motivations of artistic envisioning of Ballet Philippines?

Well of course there's a level of sustainability, like performing in a big theater— it's a 2000 seater. So you have to consider— will people actually go and buy tickets for this show?

So I'd say the more popular titles will ensure a better audience.

Romeo and Juliet everyone knows. *Swan Lake*. But when we first performed *Encantada*, I'm sure it was an unusual idea.

Nowadays we do have Filipino classics and that has a resonance. But to do a new work will have less resonance. That's one reason.

We're also very conscious of our role in nation building, because we're part of a public space. And while we don't get that much funding— very little funding— it's really a company for the Filipino people I guess. So we do want to fulfill that. It's really on these two things— that our dancers have the capacity to dance the classics in anywhere else in the world, but also to develop special work that's really for the Filipinos.

What are some similarities and distinctions between your artistic directions and the previous directors?

People say and I do think my envisioning is closer to Alice, but in a very different context. Her company was very well supported. It was Martial Law, and they had to play around with the politics a lot. But Ballet Philippines is the pioneer professional company

in Manila— so they did the first dance season, first international tour... I'm a much more modern person. I have a strong theater background, I'm also a filmmaker. A lot of my dances have a cinematic concept. In that sense, I do like things out of the box like Denisa Reyes also.

Before Ballet Philippines, I was artistic director of two other companies: one was a theater company for about 10 years, and the other was a contemporary dance company for six years here in Manila. I would say I'm more pragmatic and concerned with the bigger picture as well. And really because we don't have that much support, it's always a question of the sustainability— *how will this come back to supporting the dancers.*

Is Ballet Philippines a national dance company?

We function as a national company, but we're not really. We don't really have a designation as a national company, but we're trying to get that, and the funding to go with it. But still, people have an expectation.

Now there are three ballet companies in Manila. Ballet Philippines is my initiative. I would say Alice's biggest contribution was professionalizing, because she put up the first company. They put out the first salaries. The idea was really for dance not to be a hobby, but a profession, and that was really successful.

That was 40 years ago. 1969.

So with Dance.Manila [dance conference] and our recent efforts, we want to achieve some sort of industrialization. Beyond professionalization, how do you achieve a bigger impact in society? In truth it would be great if it would go outside of Manila, too. We have many dance schools outside Manila, but maybe no professional dance companies outside of Manila. But recently, we have a friend Paul Hickman from Australia who will put a contemporary company in Cebu, and I'm really excited about that.

Of course Agnes Locsin is based in Davao and she has her own shows and recitals, so she does that too. I think it's growing bigger, but I would want more national and more systematic. That's why I'm working for industrialization a little bigger— which means laws, systems in the Performing Arts field— So that it's recognized as a viable and important part. Having standards.

How do you see Ballet Philippines reflecting continuity of culture?

My personal theory...

Philippine history and culture is really a story of diversity. The Philippines is really a melting pot of cultures, having had our colonial experience and all of that. It makes it really part of us. Everybody knows classical music. Everybody plays the piano, the guitar, most places I'd say majority. Everybody reads in English, so I think our programming reflects that culture is diverse, dynamic. So it embraces even Western culture as part of it. As an artist I'd say it's still important if you can do a difficult part and succeed in it. Of course the trappings can be different. Our next production is *Firebird*. 20th century, it's very famous for its design and costume. We're doing a whole new one that's based on a pre-Hispanic Philippines concept. But that's just really visual. We do try to bring things for the discussion of *what is culture*. But we have many folk dance companies in Manila, so I think that's really their role. We have a national folk dance company, Bayanihan. On our part, Ballet Philippines is for showing the diversity and the different threads.

Can you give an example of visuals? Attire?

Yes, costumes and everything.

They're based on the Boxer Codex, which are the earliest drawings of the Filipino people by the Spanish. There have been a few exhibits on this. People call it the Gold Period, because apparently there was a lot of gold in Manila before the Spanish came. *(Paul says this as he is showing me pictures of the costume designs on his cell phone)*

What is contemporary dance to you and how does it reflect through Ballet Philippines?

In Ballet Philippines, we have productions that are contemporary but people in Europe would call them modern. Agnes and even Alice— Alice is a little based on Graham, and Alice from Hanya Holm.

But I'd say the other choreo-graphers do contemporary. Contemporary is really what the

people of today are exploring. So in Manila, it's not so much a conceptual idea of contemporary dance, although there is some of that. It's really a fascination of movement. Most of the contemporary dancers of Manila explore their own movement and their own approaches to dance.

What is the philosophy or approach to creating contemporary dances for Ballet Philippines? Does it differ from ballet productions?

It's very different. Really represents the diverse things. Ballet is trying to achieve a classical idea, so it's very square in a sense... to achieve all that technique and then rise above it in a sense, artistically. In the contemporary dances, the creations that we make are really... nobody ever says "don't think out of the box." It's always "go for it." We work with a lot of local and international choreo-graphers— the influences filter. Myself at my age, watching the other choreo-graphers. I'm always influenced by that. I guess my wish would be for people to really find their voice. But I believe in the process. They just keep creating work and it will happen. The same for me, I'm hoping to find my voice.

In contemporary dances, would you say the dances have some sort of improvisation, or chance to create and input some of their ideas?

Yes, and also depends on the choreo-graphers.

We don't have that much money, so many things have to fall into place. They have to be willing and interested. They won't get the fee they might get in the West, but they get very warm company. Most of them say it's special working here because the dancers are really here to dance. They're not making much or we're not so popular in the Philippines, so it's a struggle. But in terms of attitude, the dancers are really hungry and they really want to dance.

What would you want Filipinos to feel or sense from watching Ballet Philippines productions?

I wish they would be a little bit inspired. Because I think ballet especially is really

aspirational. You try to break your body so that it's more that it can be. To get some inspiration from that as a people, to show people united, strong people, energetic people. That would be my idea.

What do you hope the dancers and members of Ballet Philippines will gain from their experiences?

It's a school also and a professional company. In terms of the school, I would hope that they get a good formation and of course, we keep working on this by improving the syllabus, the systems, the facilities to have a better school. As a professional dancer, to give them a good professional experience, which they get through professional experiences like touring. But specifically as Filipinos, I think it really enriches them: One— to work with the former artists, creators of Ballet Philippines. We're very lucky in a sense, there were nine Artistic Directors before me. And one time my Musical Director was so happy— he said *this is so amazing that you actually have five of the former directors in the rehearsal room*. Part of my thing is to revive a lot of the repertoire, so I would say they would have experienced all of that. 50 years of tradition and works. And by doing all of these works, especially Filipino works, I think, in a way, it helps them be better Filipinos. To understand what it is to be Filipino. I have a dancer who has played Rizal, Bonifacio, all these characters, and I think even on a subconscious level, it gives them a different level. We're still more or less an out-of-the-box company among the three ballet companies. So my dancers would be very critical and interested to watch movies or plays. I hope we develop artists, not just dancers for money.

In academia, where do you see the field of dance now?

There are no Masters programs. Nobody's offering that. But there are at least three universities who offer Bachelors. The UP program is where I was at for a Minor, but I'm very familiar with their program.

It's sort of a difficult process in applying for your Bachelors to get a degree in Dance there. They produce a lot of interesting dance and academics.

It's promising, but it's also, I think a road for professional groups. It shows there's

somewhere you can go to where you can be employed. Alice Reyes, our founder in a recent interview said: *you can't really survive being a choreographer in Manila*. More or less, there's not really a success financially, maybe artistically. So we also have to improve that. We also have to be realistic. The work has to be good enough to deserve the audience. In reality, also the marketing has to be good, the social media work has to be good. It's very complex.

Where do you see the field of dance in the Philippines in the future? What would you envision it to be?

I think dance in general or this whole idea of ballet has always been in question because it relies on so much support and energy to put up a production, but my wish is for more people to go to the theater and to appreciate and understand it. I would say we only have Ballet Philippines because we have this theater. We had this theater; there was no programming, so the founders said *maybe we'll put up a concert*. It's successful. *Let's put up another one. Let's put up a school*. And eventually we have a company. And that's really led to... dancers are one of our major exports in Manila. Most of the dancers go abroad and perform. A lot of our dancers end up unfortunately in the cruise ships or Hong Kong Disneyland, but some of them end up starring in ballet companies or Cirque Du Soleil. It's definitely empowering to them, on a professional and world class level. But I'm more excited when they put up their own company, or ambitious, or something like this. Dance.Manila [Conference] really celebrated this idea that... it's so strange that Manila has three ballet companies, and for the longest time these companies wouldn't talk to each other or work together, because they're so competitive. There are so little sources and we all have to be fighting for the same resources. We decided that we have to put our thinking together, but we also have to celebrate that it's the only city outside of London and Europe who have three professional ballet companies. Most cities would be happy supporting one. And I have a lot of interesting theories on why that happened— it's really a competition or what. We have three full-

time companies, so it means any given day of the normal week, up to 120 people are working and are professional dancers. That's why the idea is to industrialize and to protect this and celebrate it.

APPENDIX C

Transcript Interview: UP Dance Students — Japhet Mari “JM” Cabling, Honey Lynn Juntila, accompanied by UP Assistant Professor Angela Baguilat

31 July 2016

This interview was on the dancer/choreo-graphers' experiences with *transcreation* and choreo-graphy as experienced in the UP Diliman Dance program. The interviewees and their choreo-graphed senior thesis pieces are:

- Japhet Mari “JM” Cabling: *Nasalapu-an* (A Panay Bukidnon birthing ritual)
- Honey Lynn Juntila: *Bai Bankeul* (The Obstinate Princess)

What are your names and your graduation years?

JM: I'm JM, and I graduated last year. I'm now working as a choreo-grapher and dance teacher in a ballet school in Pampanga. It's once a week, so I go every Tuesday. Teaching contemporary dance. I'm 23.

Honey: I'm Honey, and I'm in my last year of my Bachelors, soon to graduate next year. I'm 22 years old.

What are your main forms of dance training, and how long have you both been dancing?

JM: I've been dancing for 10 years, but way back in high school we were folk dancers, dance majors, at the Philippine High School for the Arts. It's a double curricula high school. In the morning, we take our general education subjects, and in the afternoon we take our Arts subjects wherein we specialize in our folk dances. Philippine folk dances. And then, when we went to college, that's where we started taking classical ballet and

contemporary under teacher Angela. We also take a year of Asian dances, specifically bharatanatyam and some South East Asian dances.

Are the Asian dance forms part of the requirement?

Both: Yes, two semesters.

Honey: We're almost the same, but he's just older. I started at 11 years old, also in folk dance. Then I continued here when I was 17. That's when I first started our first formal training in ballet. It was hard because we're 17 years old, and we just started doing ballet.

Can you explain how the dance track was in your high school learning different dance forms?

JM: We have to choose one major when we join Philippine High School for the Arts. So most of our days we spend training on folk dance, but we had every week— a day— for classical ballet. So we have a little introduction to it.

How did you come to the decision to take the direction of learning another dance form when you came here to UP?

JM: Well first, personally, I joined this program because of the scholarship given to me. Actually I was a bit unsure of what I was taking, but because of the scholarship, I grabbed the chance. Most of the teachers told me that it's easier compared to the girls to learn ballet at a very late age, so it's fine. I personally had a hard time learning ballet at first, because it's not really usual to my body. Although I easily adapted to contemporary better than classical ballet, but since everything is required, there's no choice (laughs).

Honey: I was also unsure because of the pointe shoes. But my co-senior back in high school encouraged me. He said everything can be learned, so don't be afraid. So I believe in that. I told myself "okay, why not try something new that's not usual to me?" At first it was very hard because ballet has very strict lines. In everyday doing ballet, I think it's a long process to adapt in my body. But I believe because of Jamie, it makes us better in our alignment.

JM: It's kind of difficult for us to learn ballet. In ballet, you're taught to look light, compared to folkdance, you're taught to look balanced.

Honey: And the head, it's hard to coordinate.

What and when was your decision to go from dancing to choreo-graphing? What was that moment?

JM: During our high school, we were required to put up a production. In that production we needed to choreo-graph the whole thing. Since it was also sort of required, we had no choice but to do it. But then in college, in UP Dance Company where we are part of, we are encouraged— highly encouraged— to explore things, and to choreo-graph even though there's no performance set. We took some choreo-graphy subjects here, Dance Composition, for a year. So at least we had a formal knowledge on how to choreo-graph. We also had a dance recital where we needed to put up a production as well. So for me, it's a mixture of a choice and no choice in choreo-graphing (laughs) but then afterwards, I enjoy doing it and I realize that most of my career will be dedicated to choreo-graphing for now.

Honey: I choreo-graphed twice. One was in high school and then recently last year. So it's also hard because choreo-graphy is not really my thing. I like dancing better than choreo-graphing. It's also no choice, but my partner helped me to push. You just have

to explore and watch their dances, and interpret in your own way. Eventually you'll have an outcome that you did not expect.

Would you say you mostly choreo-graph contemporary pieces?

JM: Yes, on Philippine adaptations, transcreation. It's a term by Steven Patrick Fernandez.

Angela: The adaptation by Steven Fernandez is: you literally borrow from a true tradition or culture, and you take it out. Of course when you borrow something that is intangible, you do not give it back, right? But you have to present it in a new form, without erasing their culture. You still present the same culture that they have. So the history of transcreation is— you take it out of the tribe or the clan, and you put it out in the street or the stage, but the essence of the tradition should be intact. Of course there are issues there because, of course, intellectual property rights, etc. So it's really a very new word. But then again, documents of this are fast multiplying, because the transcreations before are only done by this group IPAG [Integrated Performing Arts Guild] in Mindanao, but people are already doing it here in Manila. So I guess it's becoming an accepted word already. There are a lot of questions still for its process, because Steven said you have to present their culture as it is. But remember when we say authenticity— when you take it out, it's not anymore authentic. If somebody else does it outside of the tribesmen, then how can you say it's the same thing? In their [JM and Honey] case, I think it's very clear that they transcreated the culture. For me the transcreation that they did was to immerse with their culture, imbibe their daily lives, and put it into choreo-graphy. So I think that's a safer way of saying that you transcreated things. For example, JM, he put into choreo-graphy, or put into his concept, his whole experience. From his ride in their local transportation there when he was immersed. He had immersion there...his fieldwork. Gestures that he saw while talking and interviewing the Panay Bukidnon people, it was very natural to them. So you can see it in his choreo-graphy.

For me, something like that there where you make it your own, that you observe from your fieldwork, from the tribespeople, and you translate it into your own experience, such as making it into a masterpiece.

Actually also for Blaan, for her [Honey], for *Bai Bankeul*, I think they went through the same process. Though it was difficult for them because hers was an adaptation of a folk tale—the *Bai Bankeul*. So it's a little bit different because the narrative is set. For them [the Blaan], it's a tradition. It's a ritual that they do in Panay Bukidnon. It's not actually a dance in itself. It's a tradition of birthing. So they were the ones who made the narrative out of the tradition that they have. It was a different process. For them, it was a narrative first, and then they had to do another version. Of course I'm sure there's a lot of versions that this story has been told. Maybe there was a play, or maybe there was a choral. This is their own version. They rendered it through contemporary ballets.

This is interesting to me because dance or choreo-graphy is a text. So that's what I see and hear when you're explaining your choreo-graphy. That's your text. I understand that, but I've never heard of transcreation before. Can you tell me more about it?

Angela: You can read more about Steve Fernandez. You can look it up the Musica Journal. You can go to the Ethnomusicology Department. It's available there. You can buy it.

On that, can you share your learning experiences while doing transcreation?

JM: When I was choreo-graphing that ballet... when I was first at the immersion, I was trying to figure out what would be the possible peak of my choreo-graphy. At first I decided on translating their epic chants. But then it was really difficult for me to understand, and their music was really difficult to translate in dance because there was a specific rhythm for women, a specific rhythm for men. And personally I wasn't that confident to translate it into dance because I might be accused of decontextualizing

their culture, and so I just took out the main process of their birthing ritual. And I interviewed different people. I put it together, and so we made a new narrative. So the steps used were mainly from their folk dance, which is the *binanog*. It's a social dance for males and females, where they imitate birds from their region. Using their folk dance, I learned their footsteps. I learned their stance. I think that's the main thing I was so strict of, was how they stand and how it should be done in folk dance. How they do it in folk dance, I made sure that's how I should also do it in contemporary ballet. Because if it's done in another way I don't think it will be as close as their folk dance.

Like the essence of it?

JM: Yes. Also when you dance their folk dance, *binanog*, they use a scarf. They manipulate the scarf in different ways, and there were different meanings in how you hold it. So I was also careful in doing it because if you do this (gestures), it's a different meaning. If you do it one hand (gestures), it's also different. So I don't want to just use it just because I saw it. I was careful enough. And also, the use of music. Because I hired a composer in doing the music from the College of Music, I also gave her tracks from original music from Panay Bukidnon. So I explained to her what was this and how it should be, etc. And so at least I know that I am safe, if it's comfortable enough to say. I wasn't doing something just because I saw it.

How many dancers did you have in your piece?

JM: Around 20 to 25, and it was a 25 minute piece.

How often did you rehearse?

JM: A month, but it was part of a bigger production. It was a three-part production, and that was the third part. So we did it for like two weeks. But for her [Honey's] case, it was the whole production.

Honey: One hour and fifteen minutes. It was a legend. Actually it has two parts, but we only did the first part because then it would have been very long.

So when we had our immersion, we observed their lifestyle. Actually our main target there was to observe the costumes, because their costumes are very decorated ones, and the music, and how people live there. So we lived in a very small house— a school. We were there, and we basically ask about the meanings of the textiles of their costumes, because my partner and I wanted to be safe, because we might use a textile of this and it might be misinterpreted. We were very careful specifically of the costume. Out the story, because it's the obstinate princess, the princess is very hard to please. So we asked some folk dances there, what folk dances can we use. There's this one dance there, that if the girl dances with the boy, it means she will entertain him. So we get that context, and put it in our productions. There's one part in our production, the courtship dance, and basically the men had their moments. They show off, but the princess ignores them. It's hard because it's a narrative, and we should be very careful about the gestures, because there's this tendency that it might look very balletic, and most of our dancers are ballerinas, so we train them some steps. Because Blaán is very grounded, and their steps, footworks are fast, and the hips follow, it's very hard to explain to them. And we need to show them a lot of videos. We showed them videos from a *tinlak* festival that my partner attended. So at least it helped them, even if we cannot exactly know what to say. It helped them visually, because it's dance. We were very careful also about the music. Actually our music, we don't have, specifications about. We asked our composer. We don't have specific music for this part, so we welcomed her suggestions. But there's one part that our contact from said if you want the invitation part of the production or any part, then you need to use a bamboo sound, instrument. So that's the only specification we had to her. This was her part, *the feeling should be like this*. Very visual. We had her opinions.

During your rehearsal process, or how you prepare to go into rehearsal to go into that process, what sort of workshopping or exercises would you do specifically? For example, something from their movement that may be different from how you stretch in ballet. Were there any different exercises that you maybe created to bring out this essence?

JM: In my case, I shared this choreo-graphy with my co-recitalists, and what we did was, we gave some workshops and exercises on footworks and foot stomps. It was difficult for most of them because it's not usual for them to give weight while they're moving. And although they're trying hard to stomp on the floor, it's the look. Those foot exercises, and also posture. When you dance Panay Bukidnon, they're usually in this position (depicts position). It was again difficult for them to do it because it's not usual for them and how to look grounded. We tried, although it was hard for us to teach the groundedness of a person. Sometimes when she was moving like that (both Honey and JM demonstrate. JM shifts her body to form a different shape)

Honey: with the hips out.

JM: Yes, so it allows her hips to move without actually bouncing.

Were you in his piece?

Honey: Yes.

JM: That's pretty much my process, and I think it's also the same for her, with a different set of footworks and different set of stances.

Honey: Stance and posture are the major requirements for that production.

How do these experiences in choreo-graphing and dancing transcreations affect your feelings as a Filipino and Filipina?

JM: I think since we're both trained in Folk Dance, it's more... we prefer doing choreo-graphies with folk sensibilities and...

Honey: Folk touch

JM: Yes, Because it's close to us. What's important in my choreo-graphy is that I don't look superficial. I don't choreo-graph for something that I do not know what exactly it is. For example, the bombing in whichever country

Honey: Politics

JM: Because I don't experience it, and it's hard for me. It will just turn out, blah. So as much as possible, right now in my age, I try to choreo-graph something that's close to my knowledge and my preference in dance. And I think it's kind of... there's a sense of pride it gives us because when we did these choreo-graphies, we were surprised that people invited us for interviews on *how* we did this. And it makes us feel like "wow!"

Honey: We did something.

JM: Although this is not new. Choreo-graphers way back have been doing this. But it's kind of new for the new choreographers, for our generation in a way that there are still people who are pushing to do choreo-graphies like this, and it sort of gives awareness to other people as well.

Honey: For me, it helped the dancers to understand more about the culture because we often do productions like this. They do strictly modern, strictly ballet, so productions like this, it's very new to us, to our bodies, and we are challenged to know what we want to

do, and what we want to partake since we have this culture and we want to partake. So it's very hard. Also the dancers... some would cry. There are instances like that, but they really want to do it, but they don't know who to start. So we have these videos and workshops to help them also.

JM: Also in the process of choreo-graphing, after a while, we ask our teachers to look at our works so that they give comments, criticisms.

Angela: We go through a series of mentoring. Of course, it's a show, and the main reason is... for them, they spend a lot of money, and part of it is to ensure that the show will be a success, even if it's a thesis. So technically or theoretically or ideally, we don't meddle with the work of the student. We just present it as it is. But of course there are so many other things that we need to consider, like the fact that they are spending so much to stage a show, and we want it to be successful and very well crafted.

There are different levels of revising or editing. It really depends on the student's potential in choreo-graphing. But almost always it comes to a very filtered, well-crafted, edited version of what they had before.

The process is very tedious. Of course, when you are a viewer, you only see the end, but I think the most important for them is the process from day one. I think the most difficult part that I see from them is to really look for a concept. That takes a lot of time to think and search, and source out your concept. So it's a long process. I think the easiest part for them is really choreo-graphing it. They say it's more difficult, but I think if the concept is there already. The hard part is to translate it to this medium, dance. It's different when we talk, right?

I think too, it's also helpful to get an outside eye when you're so invested in something.

Angela: It's also to train them to listen, if they make it as successful choreo-graphers. I think some of the choreo-graphers now don't listen anymore, and you think that your

work is already absolute and that it's correct. I think it just helps them to listen to outside comment, so that you can improve yourself. It's part of the mentoring that we do. There are a lot of problems, of course. There's hesitance in accepting criticisms. I think it's human nature. You don't accept what you don't think is right. There are some also that are open; those are the ones that are easy to work with. I think for them [JM and Honey], they had to build a relationship with the dancers. I think it's part of it to create a healthy relationship, because first they are friends. Then they have to go one step higher as a Creative Director, so you have to have that instant authority over them, which is kind of hard to do— to demand and command with your best friends. It's kind of hard, but those are the things they needed to deal with, aside from the choreo-graphing, conceptualizing, scheduling, looking for venues, designing the costumes. This one is another part of it.

JM: It was also hard to work with professionals, because we hired and we paid them. Being a student, how do we manage to become the overall director of everything, and to be in charge of your collaborators.

Angela: Because in that instance, even if the teachers are around, we allow them to have a full hand with what they are doing. Of course in the consultation of the advisor. As much as possible, we try not to troubleshoot them if they make a mistake. We ask them first to solve it on their own. We've been doing it for so many years, and I feel they are actually ready to go out there. It's good practice for them.

One more question: because you are folk dancers also, do you feel different sensibilities when you dance folk and the adaptations? Can you explain these experiences and any distinctions?

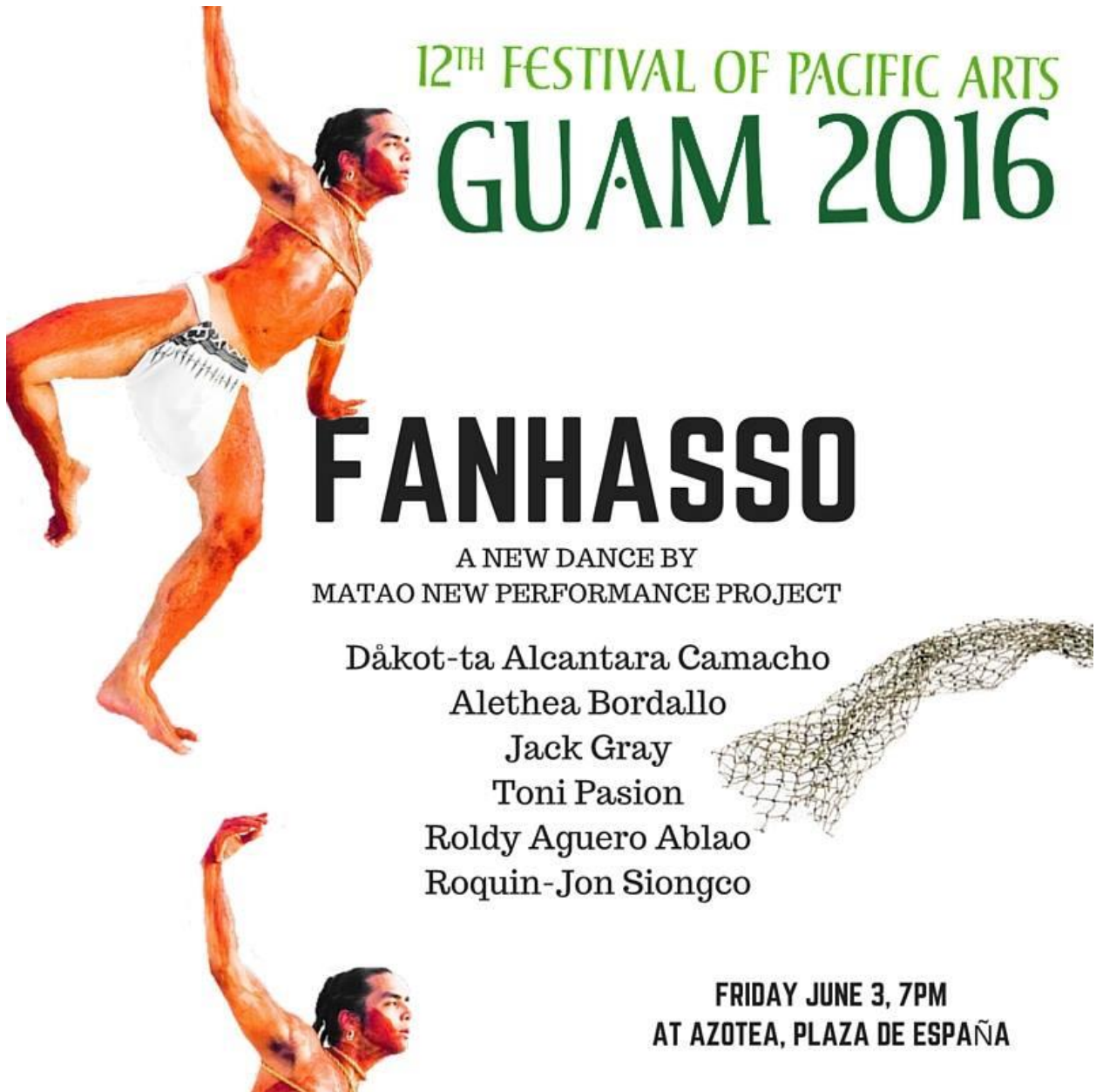
JM: I think there is, but I don't know it. Probably the use of space. In folk dance, we were trained to dance with the group, and because how our teachers stage folk dances was so symmetric in a way that spacing was really important, unlike in contemporary

dance. It's freer in a way.

Angela: It can be in a smaller space, or quieter one. I also danced folk dance. I think for folk dance itself, if you dance contemporary or ballet, it's more precise in a way that you have that body or physique that requires the skill to come out. For folk dance, I'm not belittling folk dance, but you really have to have that inner beauty, internalization of the tradition itself. I think most people can dance folk dance, given the time to practice and maintain a certain style— it's doable. If we do contemporary or ballet, it needs more than that feeling... it needs more muscular training for the body itself. So if we're talking about sensibilities, there's a difference physically and stamina-wise also.

APPENDIX D

Fanhasso Performance Flyer



12TH FESTIVAL OF PACIFIC ARTS
GUAM 2016

FANHASSO

A NEW DANCE BY
MATAO NEW PERFORMANCE PROJECT

Dåkot-ta Alcantara Camacho
Alethea Bordallo
Jack Gray
Toni Pasion
Roldy Agüero Ablao
Roquin-Jon Siongco

**FRIDAY JUNE 3, 7PM
AT AZOTEA, PLAZA DE ESPAÑA**

APPENDIX E

I Moving Lab, Moloka'i Performance Flyer



The flyer features a large background image of a person in a crouched pose on a wooden plank, with a smaller inset photo of Jack Gray. The text is arranged in a clean, modern layout with a mix of white and orange colors on a dark background.

MOVING LAB

MOLOKAI

WHAT:
FREE Dance Movement
Workshop & Public Performance

WHERE: **KALANIANA'OLE HALL**
605 MAUNALOA HWY

WHEN:
Sunday, Nov. 20th 2016

Workshop	4-5pm
Public Performance	5-6pm
Potluck	6pm-pau

• DONATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED AT DOOR
• FOR MORE DETAILS CALL:
ehulani (808) 658-0789

more info: imovinglab.com

Jack Gray
Founder,
Performer, Artist

APPENDIX F

Manariwa: Part 1 Performance Flyer

MANARIWA

~ part 1 of 2 ~

Friday Feb. 3, 2017

8:00pm-9:00pm

doors at 7:30pm, followed by Q&A

UHM Theatre + Dance

Free to the public

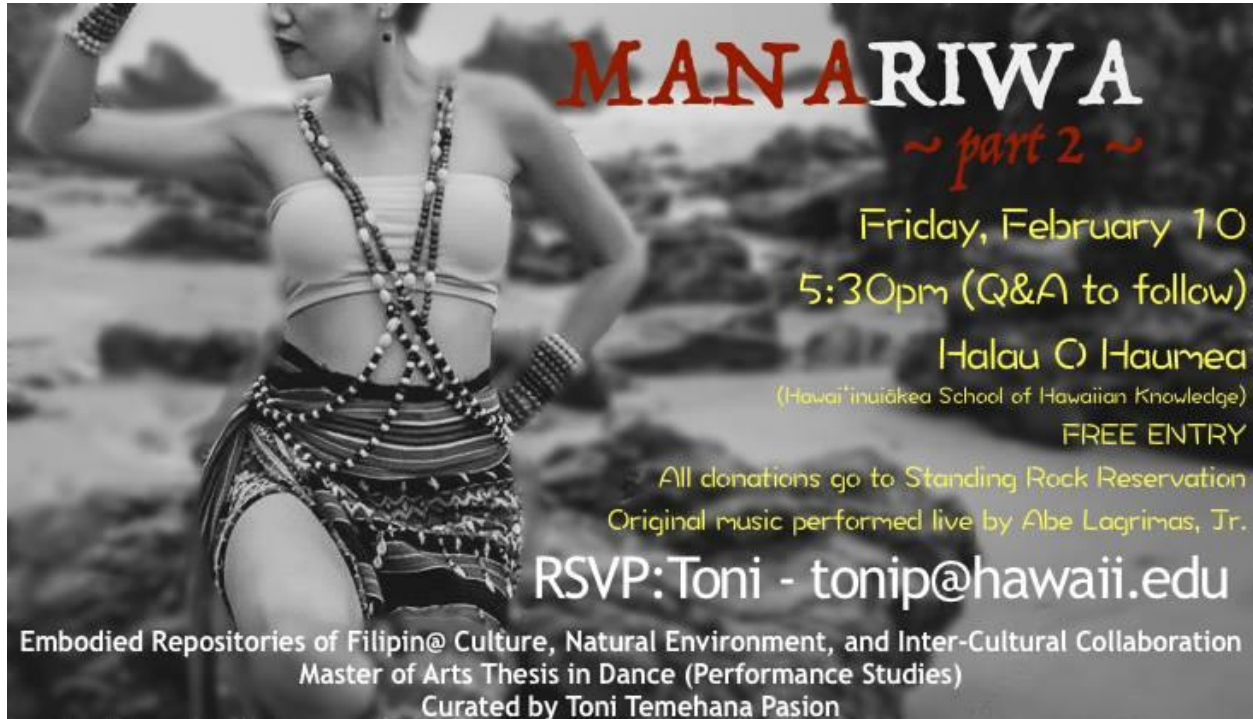
Dance Building Studio

RSVP: tonip@hawaii.edu

- Embodied repositories of Filipin@ culture, natural environment, and inter-cultural collaboration
- Master of Arts in Dance (Performance Studies)
- Curated by Toni Temehana Pasion

APPENDIX G

Manariwa: Part 2 Performance Flyer



MANARIWA
~ part 2 ~

Friday, February 10
5:30pm (Q&A to follow)

Halau O Haumea
(Hawai'iinuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge)

FREE ENTRY

All donations go to Standing Rock Reservation
Original music performed live by Abe Lagrimas, Jr.

RSVP: Toni - tonip@hawaii.edu

Embodied Repositories of Filipin@ Culture, Natural Environment, and Inter-Cultural Collaboration
Master of Arts Thesis in Dance (Performance Studies)
Curated by Toni Temehana Pasion

APPENDIX H

Manariwa: Part 2 Performance Link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C75SHPVzmnE>

APPENDIX I

Ray Kalani Pascual Post-Performance Reflection

Ray was a dancer in both *Manariwa* performances. He reflects upon his experience choreo-graphing and workshopping on gender fluidity in the piece “Ray.” This was sent to me via e-mail on 04 April 2017.

I had a wonderful time working with Toni and all the other dancers on this project of hers. When she approached me and inquired whether or not I would be willing to dance a solo, I gladly accepted it with a smile. Left with slight confusion at first, my gears then shifted to determination.

I smiled because the premise of the dance excited me, I was slightly confused because at first I did not know how to approach beginning the task, and finally I was determined because the job of which I was bestowed was, well for me, a huge responsibility; I did not want to do the topic of it an injustice. Being that the dance is about Gender and its spectrum, and also the relationship some have with it being more fluid than others, I went to Youtube for some inspiration.

I am a male; I exist in the idea of being a male and have never aligned myself with any other conflicting idea of who I may be in terms of my gender identity. Because of this, I fully believed that me starting from my base knowledge and experience as a human would have been a crime to the dance piece. This is why I watched videos of people explaining to the best of their ability their experience being gender queer and through these videos I derived my inspiration.

I pushed my dining table to a wall, made some space for me to dance, and got to work. At first I started off with emulating hand gestures. I observed how the individuals in

these Youtube videos were physically responding to themselves in the moment of explanation of these important concepts. I took these correlating hand gestures to somehow work into the dance. That is what inspired me to use my hands in sweeping motions throughout the piece as well as involving bringing them close to my face. I really wanted the piece to be about expression and the outward view of someone and its innerworkings with the inner view that someone has about himself. This was fitting in supporting my idea of bringing my hands close to my face because someone's face is a huge identity identifier for people.

I also then began to workshop my energy and emulating sort of the ying and yang everyone has. Masculine energy and feminine energy exists within everyone and me exploring the dance space in the way that I did was a vessel in communicating that. I wanted to be up, I wanted to be down, I wanted to include small burst of energy as well as sustained energy. I wanted to really just exist while dancing, I wanted to have fun. And I think that's what anyone really wants to do. Gender can be a road block to happiness, and dancing this and hopefully affecting the audiences that came to watch Toni's shows, I hope I helped alleviate some weight that the concept of gender has on people and it's restraining qualities.

I had fun with the task Toni gave me. And I hope to work with her again because I think she does important work. I did not expect of this from myself and am so happy to have been part of the community she created among us dancers.

APPENDIX J

Preliminary IDF Program Draft

Indigenous Dance Forum

Presented by the Asian/Pacific/American Institute at NYU

Curated by Jack Gray, Spring 2016 Artist-in-Residence

Thursday, April 21, 2016

7-9PM

at Dixon Place

The Indigenous Dance Forum is the culminating showcase of Jack Gray's semester-long residency at the Asian/Pacific/American Institute at NYU. During his residency, Gray has explored Indigenous methodologies of gathering, convening, dialogue, activation, and creation. The guiding values of the residency have been to increase public recognition of the first peoples of New York through transformative interventions acknowledging New York's Indigenous place names of Mannahatta: "Land of Many Hills" (the original name of Manhattan) and Lenapehoking, "in the Land of the Lenape" (original territory). Over the past few months, Gray has facilitated seven public programs including creative focus group sessions, song and dance workshops, and an exploration adventure of Mannahatta. Every step of the process was shaped by the collective imagination of the participants, who have carved the project's development and destiny.

The project's Native American, First Nations and Indigenous collaborators come from a range of American states, unincorporated territories, bordered lands on Turtle Island, in the Pacific and Asia. They identify in a diverse range of ways, and represent the following lineages: Haudensaunee, Kānaka Maoli, Maori, Matao/Chamorro, Mattinencock, Maya, Mexika, Munsee-Delaware, Purehpecha, Quw'utsun', Santo Domingo Pueblo, Seneca, Yup'ik.

Gray is fundraising for the Wolf Conservation Center in South Salem, New York and for the Lunaape Language Revitalization Project. Please consider making a donation at www.gofundme.com/5kx5j4vw

Message from the A/P/A Institute

PROGRAM

6:15-7PM: Native Artisans/Causes Market

Tecumseh Ceaser, Nativetec

Arianna Lauren, Quw'utsun Made

Hosanna Sophia Littlebird, HSL Designs

Karen Mosko, Lunaape Language Calendar

Deborah Hayes, Wolf Conservation Center

Giarna Te Kanawa, ORA Gallery

Yvette Sitten, Aurora Alchemy

7-9PM: Indigenous Dance Forum

Indigenous Activations Onstage

Interactive audience-performer community space making with the IDF crew, local and global community.

Welcome

Karen Mosko, Munsee-Delaware Nation, Ontario, Canada

Screening: "Episode 4: Indigenous Contemporary Dance Masterclass" Premiere

Performance

The beginning stages of a new dance work, inspired by the research explored throughout this residency.

Choreography/Set Direction: Jack Gray

Ceremony/Sound Composition: Dåkot-ta Alcantara Camacho

Sound Recording/live accompaniment: Tecumseh Ceaser, Jerome Kavanagh, Francois Richomme, and Grace Osborne

Costume Design: Ruth Woodbury and Rosanna Raymond (courtesy of Atamira Dance Company)

Creators/Performers/Cultural Artists: Mária Regina Firmino Castillo, Tohil Fidel Brito Bernal, Keke Brown, Dåkot-ta Alcantara Camacho, Christian Anayas, Jasmin Canuel, Tecumseh Ceaser, Marina Celander, Alison Lehuanani DeFranco, Sammay Dizon, Jeannae Flores, Alec Lichtenberg, Mark Mauikanehoalani Lovell, Dorine Hoeksema, Bianca Hyslop, Emily Johnson, Karen Mosko, Grace Osbourne, Toni Pasion, Kaina Quenga, and Marya Wethers

Panel

Panelists: Beatrice Glow, Alison Lehuanani DeFranco, Mark Mauikanehoalani Lovell, Toni Pasion, and Grace Osborne, Courtney Moezzi Brown, Gibran Raya

Closing Remarks

Jack Tchen and Jack Gray

9PM: Edible Art in the Dixon Place Cafe (please patron the cash bar to support this amazing venue!)

ABOUT

Jack Gray (Ngati Porou, Ngapuhi, Te Rarawa, Ngati Kahungunu) is an acclaimed dancer, choreographer, and scholar. Born in Auckland, New Zealand, Gray first connected to his cultural roots through traditional Māori dance, Kapa Haka, and later discovered contemporary dance. In 2000, he founded the Atamira Dance Company, an all Māori contemporary dance theatre, which has since become one of the nation's premiere dance companies. Gray is committed to developing Indigenous epistemologies as a crossover into mainstream practices of dance and theatre. Since 2012, he has fostered an intercultural network of communities in the United States, activating cultural awareness and promoting strategies for Indigenous empowerment. He has collaborated with Dancing Earth Creations (New Mexico), Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum (Hawai'i), University of California, Riverside, and University of California, Berkeley, among many organizations and institutions. He is the Spring 2016 Artist-in-Residence at the Asian/Pacific/American Institute at NYU. In 2016, Gray was awarded membership to Toi Iho, a trademark that guarantees authenticity and quality for Māori artists.

The Asian/Pacific/American Institute at New York University was established in 1996 in response to student interest combined with the University's commitment to global excellence. It provides a space in which research and public programs, with a focus on community and intercultural studies, are made accessible to faculty, students, and the New York community within a broad, rigorous international and comparative framework.

The A/P/A Institute at NYU produces programming, publications, exhibitions, new research, and a long-running artist-in-residence program, attracting leading academics and practitioners. The Institute's multiple archival collection initiatives have also continued to build a foundation of, and preservation and access to, important historical documents and previously overlooked materials for present and future researchers and students.

Located in Greenwich Village, the Institute serves the community highlighting research, cultural production, and scholarship on contemporary issues facing Asian/Pacific American communities, and provides a nexus for scholars, community leaders, and artists who are working on advancing scholarship in the field and bringing theory into practice.

Dixon Place, an artistic incubator since 1986, is a non-profit institution committed to supporting the creative process by presenting original works of theater, dance, music, puppetry, circus arts, literature and visual art at all stages of development. Presenting over 1000 creators a year, this local haven inspires and encourages diverse artists of all stripes and callings to take risks, generate new ideas and consummate new practices. dixonplace.org

Special thanks:
A/P/A Institute at NYU Staff
Dixon Place Staff

Gray would like to thank the entire team at the Asian/Pacific/American Institute at NYU for hosting the residency and the Creative Focus Group: Cleo Barnett, Jacqui Bennett, Keke Brown, Courtney Moezzi Brown, Chief Reggie Herb Dancer Ceasar, Tecumseh Ceaser, Abram De Bruyn, Alison Lehuanani DeFranco, Karen Finley, Beatrice Glow, Dorine Hoeksema, Ash Izbiter, Alex Jimerson, Alec Lichtenberg, Claudia Masoni, Alan Michelson, Grace Osborne, Rebecca Scheckman, Pilar Solomon-Jefferson, Weslyn Stephens, Giarna Te Kanawa, and Marya Wethers.

Thanks to Dances with Wolves Indigenous Contemporary Dance Workshop leaders, Emily Johnson, Louise Potiki Bryant, Sammay Dizon and Atamira Dance Company's Bianca Hyslop and Jasmin Canuel.

CHOREOGRAPHER/CURATOR:
Jack Gray (Aotearoa)

CULTURAL CONSULTANT:
Karen Mosko (Munsee-Delaware Nation, Ontario, Canada)

DANCERS:
Dâkot-ta Alcantara Camacho (Guâhan)
Christian Anayas (New York)
Bianca Hyslop (Aotearoa)
Jasmin Canuel (Aotearoa)
Marya Wethers (New York)
Sammay Dizon (California)

Alison DeFranco (New York)
Alec Lichtenberg (New York)
Dorine Hoeksema (New York)

CULTURAL COLLABORATORS:

Jennae Flores (Washington, DC)
Kaina Quenga (New York)
Gibran Raya (New York)
Mária Regina Firmino Castillo (Guatemala)
Tohil Fidel Brito Bernal (Guatemala)

FORUM SCHOLARS

Toni Pasion (Hawai'i)
Mark Mauikanehoalani Lovell (Hawai'i)

MARKET/ARTISANS

Tecumseh Ceaser (Long Island)
Sophia Littlebird (New York)
Arianna Lauren (Seattle)

DANCES WITH WOLVES GUESTS

Louise Potiki Bryant (Aotearoa)
Emily Johnson (New York)

SOUND:

Dákot-ta Alcantara Camacho (Guåhan)
Grace Osborne (New York)
Jerome Kavanagh (Aotearoa)
Tecumseh Ceaser (Long Island)

Jack would like to thank the CREATIVE FOCUS GROUP for meeting and participating during the residency including:

Rebecca Scheckman (USHER)
Abram De Bruyn (USHER)
Alec Lichtenberg (DANCING)
Alison DeFranco (DANCING)
Marya Wethers (DANCING)
Dorine Hoeksema (DANCING)
Alex Jimerson

Weslyn Stephens
Cleo Barnett

Karen Finley
Alan Michelson
Beatrice Glow
Claudia Masoni
Pilar Solomon-Jefferson
Keke Brown
Jacqui Bennet
Giarna Te Kanawa
Reginald Ceaser
Tecumseh Ceaser
Ash Izbitser
Grace Osborne
Courtney Moezzi Brown

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